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87 MARCH

WHITE DWARF

THE ROLE-PLAYING GAMES MONTHLY

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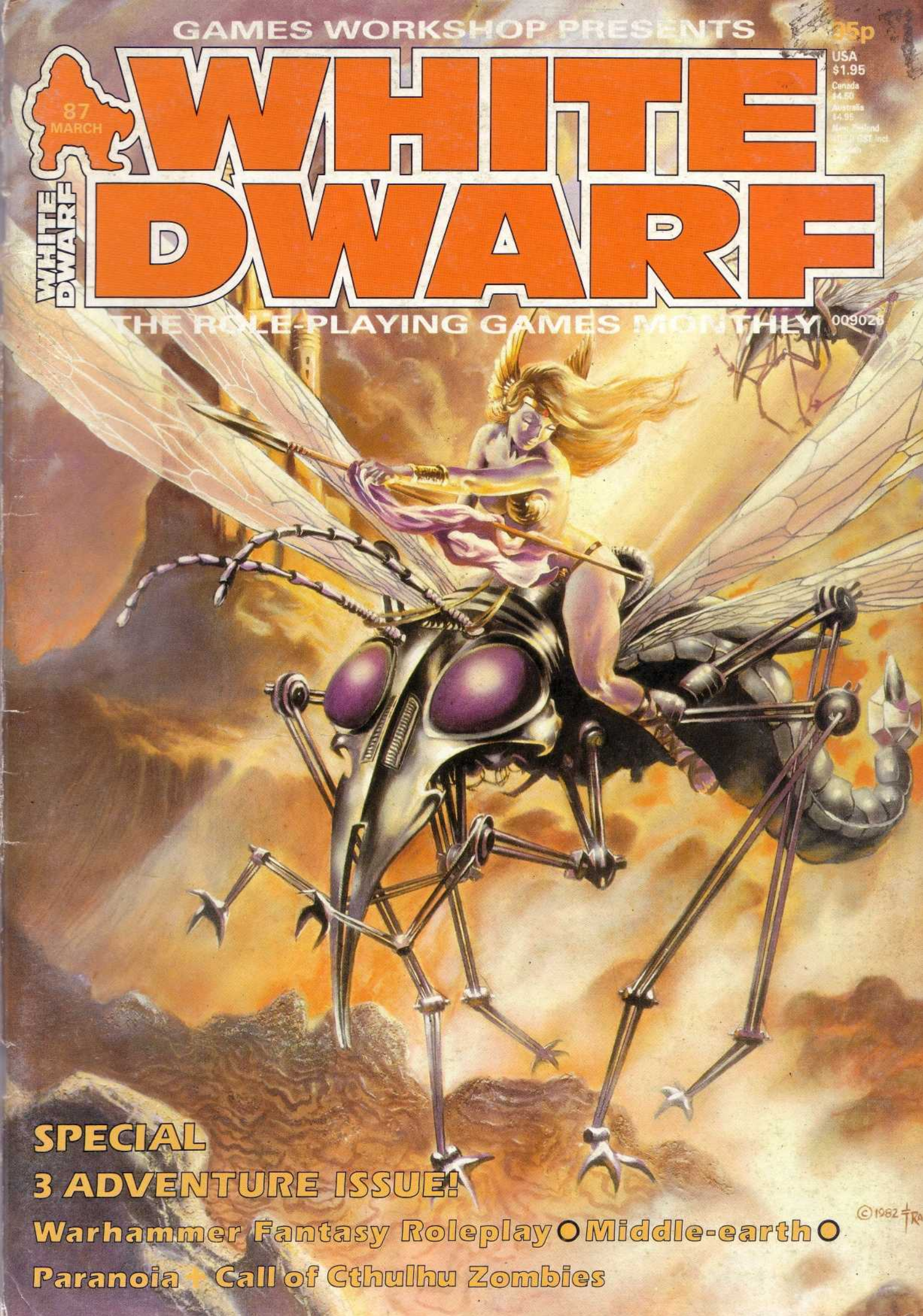

SPECIAL

3 ADVENTURE ISSUE!

Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay ○ Middle-earth ○

Paranoia + Call of Cthulhu Zombies

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WHITE DWARF

ISSUE 87 MARCH 1987

EDITOR: Mike Brunton
THE WORKER: Marc Gascoigne
DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY: Charles Elliott
PRODUCTION: Mark Craven, Ian Varley, Ruth Jeffery, David Oliver, Joanne Podoski, Sue McLoughlin, Richard Wright
COVER: Frank Brunner
ILLUSTRATION: Ian Miller, Steve Tappin, Russ Nicholson, David Stevens
ART EDITOR: John Blanche
TYPESETTING: Julie Weaving, Gail Morgan
ADVERTISING: Ivor Chomacki
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All correspondence should be addressed to:
White Dwarf, Games Workshop Design Studio, Enfield Chambers, 14-16 Low Pavement, Nottingham NG1 7DL.

The time's they are a'changing... and so is **White Dwarf**.

And part of this process is experimentation with what goes in *Dwarf* and the way it is presented. The 16-page adventure format, for example, allows us to put more material in than you might suppose - more than two smaller adventures put together, in fact. There's nearly as much in a WD 16-pager as in an ordinary 'module' you find sitting on a game shop shelves!

The 16-page *RuneQuest* adventure was a big hit - even with people who don't play RQ. The positive response to the RuneQuest adventure (even from non-RQers) has persuaded us that this size of feature is an idea worth carrying forward; not every issue, of course (well, not just yet), but on a regular basis.

These (and the other extras that *Dwarf* will be including in future) are going to make the next year quite interesting.

And besides all that, the 10th birthday issue is coming up as well!

This *Dwarf*, however, is special because we welcome a refugee and interloper from *Warlock*: Derek the Troll. I think you'll find this lovable little... erm... thingie from Lew Stringer a more-than-worthy addition. From now on, he'll alternate with Gobbledigook (see page 59 for more details!).

Now, I suppose, we need is somebody to write a 16-page Derek adventure with pull-out extra bits...

Mike Brunton

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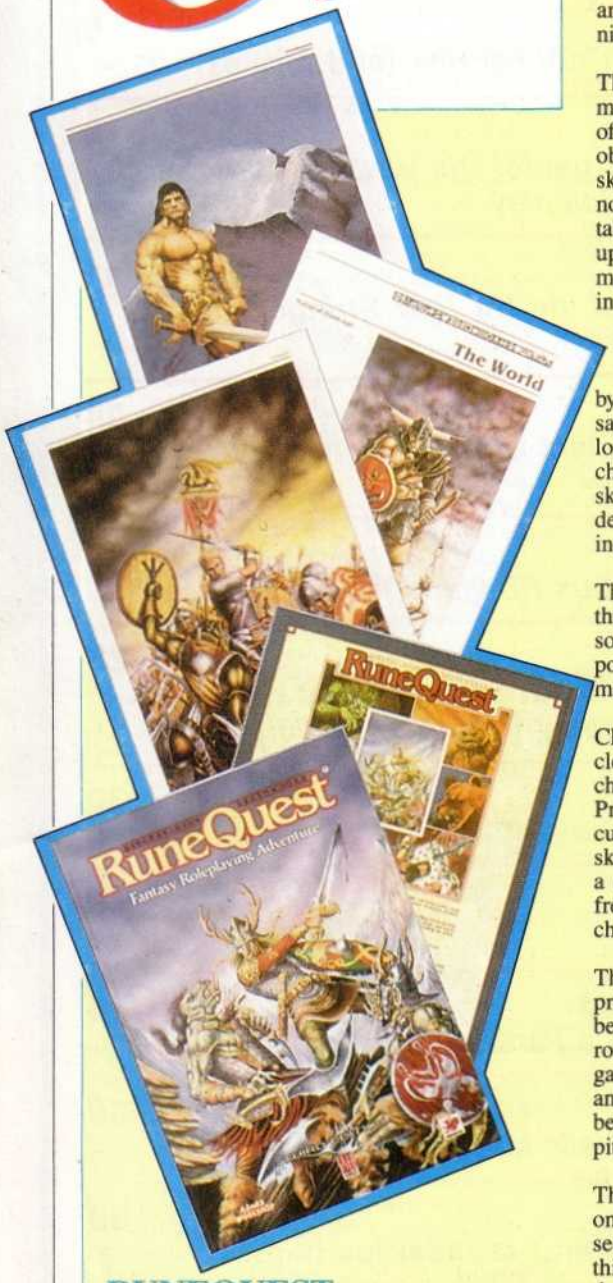
OPEN BOX



RUNEQUEST
Fantasy Roleplaying Game
Games Workshop £8.95

RuneQuest is back and at a good price too. OK, so it never really went away, but at about £40 for the Deluxe set and £20+ each for the Player's and Gamemaster's sets it might as well have done. In this new hardback format *RuneQuest* is no longer a game for the very rich or the very dedicated.

So what do you get for your money? Well, for a start, a 96 page book packed with full colour and black-and-white illustrations, making it the most attractive-looking roleplaying game available. You also get the rules to a sophisticated fantasy game which has been tried, tested and revised over the years.

The rules in this hardback comprise the core elements of the RuneQuest Third Edition. *RuneQuest III* has been stripped down almost to basics, leaving a detailed and proven system behind. This is more complicated than the system used for *Call of Cthulhu*, placing more emphasis on combat and character generation, but it is recognisably the same game.

The game utilises an effective skill system making it possible to carry out all manner of tasks. Skills relating to combat are obviously important, but there are lots of skills which make possible a wide range of non-combat actions. Characters can fast talk, orate, speak other languages and call upon all sorts of agility, knowledge and manipulation skills. Progression is handled in a simple and logical fashion, characters gain increased proficiency by using their skills successfully in stressful situations, such as picking a lock while being chased by the town guards or persuading those very same guards that you're not the one they're looking for. After the adventure is over, characters get the chance to improve any skills successfully used. Characters who dedicate themselves to training can also increase their proficiency.

The magic system is easy to use and has three types of magic - spirit, divine and sorcery. The system fits in well and it is possible for any character to learn and use magic.

Character generation is involved, but it is clearly explained and easily grasped. A character's background, whether from a Primitive, Nomad, Barbarian or Civilised culture affects his or her starting weapon skills. Personal characteristics directly affect a character's starting skills and are used frequently in play to determine a character's chance of success.

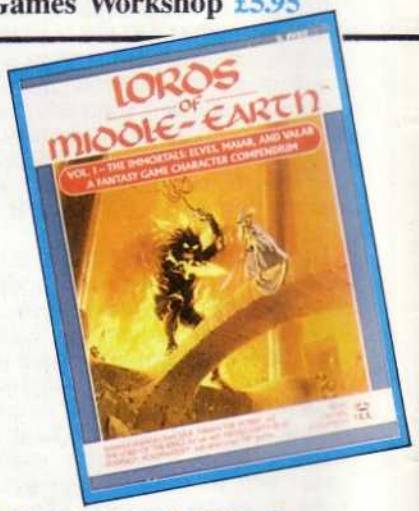
This version of *RuneQuest*, however, lacks a proper GM's section and therefore may not be ideal for anyone who has never played a roleplaying game before. Experienced gamers will have no problem in designing and running their own adventures, but beginners are left high and dry, which is a pity.

There are a few irritations with this edition: on a couple of occasions mention is made to sections of the rules which are just not in this version. The game works well without these sections, but being told to look for them is annoying and leaves you thinking that it is incomplete. A more thorough proofreading would have picked up these problems and left a much slicker product.

RQIII will mean different things to different people. Beginners should perhaps leave it until they are familiar with a more introductory system. Owners of *RuneQuest II* will find it useful as a cheap means of converting to *RQIII* rules. Experienced players of other games will find much in *RuneQuest* to recommend it and at £8.95 it is superb value and well worth getting even if you never intend to actually play it.

Peter Green

GREEN & PLEASANT LAND
Call of Cthulhu Supplement
Games Workshop £5.95



LORDS OF MIDDLE-EARTH VOLUME 1: THE IMMORTALS
Roleplaying Supplement
Iron Crown Enterprises
£7.95

I9 DAY OF AL'AKBAR
I10 RAVENLOFT II: THE HOUSE ON GRYPHON HILL
AD&D Adventures
TSR £5.50 each

For quite a few years now various people at GW have been muttering about the rumoured British sourcepack for *Call of Cthulhu*. Nothing ever seemed to come of the idea, though, and the more everyone talked about it the less likely it seemed it would ever appear. What a surprise, then, to suddenly see an ad for **Green & Pleasant Land** in last month's issue.

The content of the first half of this packed 80-page softback is pretty much what you'd expect - source material covering just about every aspect of life in Britain in the 1920s. There are expansions to the Cthulhu character creation rules covering British characters, including the innovative new idea of war experience and its resultant effects on a person's SANity! There is a large and well-informed piece on occult activities at the time, and the expected timeline of important events, mysterious happenings and the like, though I did notice that one of the great disasters of the day was apparently Bradman scoring some phenomenal amount at the Test Match! Other sections cover expected things like prices and money (including excerpts from Harrods' catalogue!), vehicles, weapons, gentleman's clubs, train routes, notable personalities of the time, and so on.

Most of the detail in this section could probably be found by a lot of diligent searching through a well-stocked library, but it's very useful to have it all in one place. I couldn't spot any glaring inaccuracies in the information, unlike in Chaosium's *Cthulhu By Gaslight*, and the occasional humorous interludes (such as the Mummerset primer for keeper's who want to speak like an authentic yokel) provide a lively balance to the more serious side of things. The writing is good, and Dwarf readers should recognise many of the names that compiler Pete Tamlyn has gathered to assemble the pack.

The second half of the pack provides three first-class adventures which seem designed specifically to take the investigators all over the country. *Death In The Post* features just that - a campaign of threatening letters to prominent people which encourages our heroes to journey around the country to try to warn their intended recipients before it's too late. *The Horror of the Glen* takes the characters to Scotland for a spine-chilling murder investigation, in which anyone reaching the conclusion that 'the butler did it' won't live to see the dawn! And finally, the adventure I shall be inflicting on my poor players first, *Shadows Over Darkbank*, wherein a boating holiday takes a decidedly sinister turn in an old canal tunnel. All three are well-written and imaginative, and will prove to be popular with keepers and investigators alike.

Add to this a short story by British Mythos writer Brian Lumley, which serves to further set the scene (another good idea, Mr Tamlyn), and you've got an incredibly useful and important package. Although it's a bit of a cliche, it's probably true that no Cthulhu referee can afford to be without this supplement.

Robert Neville

Lords of Middle-earth (LOME) is described as a 'Fantasy Character Compendium'. In this way it is a bit like book of monsters or characters such as TSR put out for *AD&D* or Mayfair for *DC Heroes*.

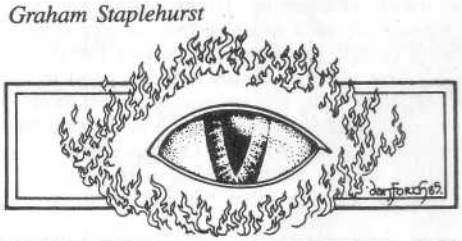
The basic idea of the *LOME* volumes is to provide, in handy reference form, a large batch of medium-high (and beyond) level characters. The characters are drawn, in the first place, from the works of JRR Tolkien, particularly *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Others have been added from the campaign supplements which ICE have published to date, such as *Lorien* and *Ardor*.

The result is an impressive volume. The production standards are very high, with a colourful McBride cover and numerous Liz Danforth interior illustrations. This is first volume of *LOME* includes 'The Immortals' - Elves, Maiar and Valar. Anyone familiar with Tolkien's work will recognise the latter as the 'angelic powers' of Middle-earth, beings of immense natural power who shaped the land and history of Tolkien's world. A thorough, almost archaeological, The authors have done a good job of interpreting powers and abilities of the very major characters, especially given the limitations of *MERP*. Many of them appear to have been made up for individual characters, such as Ulmo's 'Isle-moving' power and Tulka's ability to 'Laugh' and cause opponents to die of fright! There is, however, a strange pursuit of pointless stats: who cares that Manwe has a +250 Skiing bonus? The book is well structured. It starts off with the most powerful group, the Valar, then goes on to cover the Maiar and the greater Eldar (Elves), detailing each section in alphabetical order. Following these is a section on some 'lesser' elves and then a final look at some of the Great Enemies, including Sauron.

The sections each start with an overview of things associated with the race covered. These notes are very useful and well constructed. The most notable characters also have extensive notes (Sauron has four pages). And in addition to all this, you also get remarks on how to deploy high level characters in your game.

There is no doubt that this book is very useful. It will be of less use if you've already got a lot of the *MERP* packages, since the Valar and the Maiar are unlikely to make many appearances, but for those who are interested in Tolkien's world and are running (or want to run) a campaign there, *LOME* is excellent source material. job has been done to find out every detail of the characters noted, and for each there is a list of passages in *Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarilion* and *Unfinished Tales* which you can read to find out more about them. Also noted are mentions in ICE supplements.

Graham Staplehurst



Two modules for *AD&D* characters of levels 8-10, both with a distinctive setting and atmosphere, but of very different quality.

Day of Al'akbar invites the PCs to save Arabic lands from a red plague by retrieving a magical artefact. This involves a few token (and both pointless and silly) wilderness encounters, dungeon-crawling in a sewer, tomb-robbing, detective work in a desert town, and the (probable) big shoot-out in the Sultan's palace.

The town map included in the package is moderately useful, and the Arabic environment is persuasively detailed, but this is an uninspired effort. There are some niggling errors in the game statistics, NPCs who are more noticeable for their numbers than their believability, and some really tiresome things like an elaborately trapped room with the key to getting through it encoded in interminable doggerel verses on the door. Must we still suffer this kind of thing?

The only noteworthy thing about this pedestrian effort is Jeff Easley's sexploitation cover. Note to TSR: sales of soft porn mags are in sharp decline, so can we have less of this offensiveness please?

Ravenloft II: The House on Gryphon Hill is an altogether superior effort, a strong sequel to *I6 Ravenloft* (and *II0* is playable alone or as a sequel to *I6*). Strahd von Zarovitch is back, but he's not quite the same... I can't say much more without spoiling the strong plot and numerous surprises.

Structural elements from *Ravenloft* are used here once again - variable NPC goals, variable locations for key objects and the like - so that *Gryphon Hill* will play differently each time it is used. But the old tricks are given new twists. The old gypsy card-reader from *I6* is a mesmerist in *II0*, for example. And this is no simple re-run. The plotline is very complex, PC/NPC interactions are much more important in *II0*, and key events are used to keep the action going and direct the adventure.

There are one or two quibbles: some of the alledgedly minor encounters are rather over-the-top, reminiscent of the infamous wandering monster tables from *Ravenloft* (2-16 wights!!), and it's a lot of work for the GM. Forget the 'Read through this and be familiar with it before you run it...' spiel, you'll need to go through this at least three times. But there are useful play - and time-keeping - aids (note that *II0* is a lot better value than *I9* with more pages and a much better fold-out section), and the effort is well worth it. Lots of monsters, plenty of roleplaying, lots of offstage action, items and crucial information to be gathered, and topped off with an excellent ending. What more could you ask? Excellent, highly recommended.

Carl Sargent

WYRDWORLD 1: WINTERSFARNE
Generic FRP Adventure
Strange Acorn Games
£5.50

Wintersfarne is the first in a series of fantasy role-playing adventures produced independently by Strange Acorn Games of Weybridge, Surrey. Physically, it is a 32-page A4 booklet in a card cover, typeset on a word-processor with computer-drawn maps. It is designed to be systemless, but there are notes on using *Wintersfarne* with *AD&D, RuneQuest* and *Rolemaster/MERP.* An imaginative referee should be able to use it with any system. Overall, the production quality is good, with the standards that might be expected of a quality fanzine; the type is legible, the computer-drawn maps are plain but functional, and the interior art is quite reasonable - indeed, many 'professional' publications do a lot worse.

The plot concerns itself with the prosperous island and market town of Wintersfarne. Cattle have been vanishing, and so have the people set to guard them. Is it rustlers or bandits? Has the long-dead wizard returned to haunt his tower? Actually, the rationale behind the events is novel and interesting, and the adventure is based on thought and role-playing rather than mindless mayhem. It needs careful preparation - the more so because it is systemless, and the system-related notes at the back are rather sketchy - but should be well worth the effort.

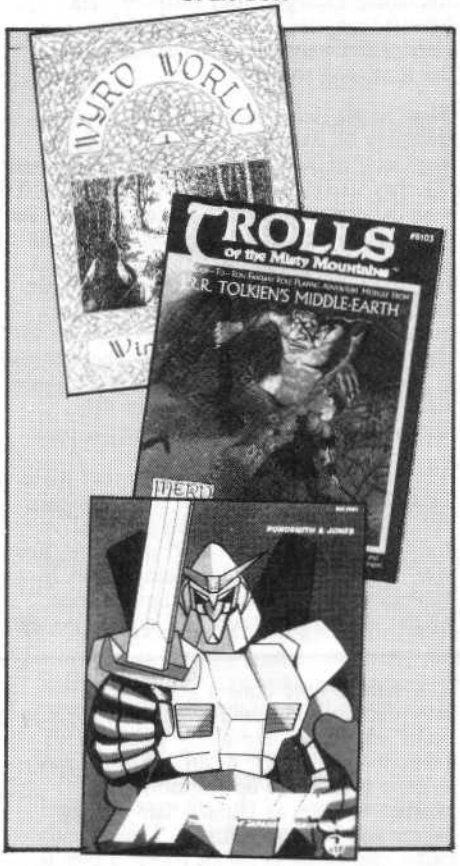
Wintersfarne is an interesting adventure, and will be enjoyed by a players who prefer thought, investigation and roleplaying to hack-and-slay. Other points in its favour include the fact that the island and town are re-usable as a setting. Points against are the dependence on a monster from a very early issue of WD (although this can be found in *The Best of White Dwarf Articles I* and is very well-used), the amount of preparation required, and the price, which is dictated by the size of the operation. On the whole, though, this is worth looking at if you want a change from dungeon-bashing, monster-pulping adventures.

Within their limitations Strange Acorn Games have done very well. The next two in the series, *Wordeseley* and *West Haven*, will be worth looking out for if they maintain the standards set by *Wintersfarne*.

Graeme Davis

TROLLS OF THE MISTY MOUNTAINS
MERP Adventure
Iron Crown Enterprises
£3.95

Trolls is the third in ICE's series of ready-to-run adventure modules for *MERP.* Like the others, it employs a standard format of three adventures linked by area, and of increasing difficulty. There is an introduction and a selection of 15 pre-generated characters which can be used either by the players or as NPCs and hirelings. The introduction also gives and overview of the major settlements in the region, some of which are involved in the following adventures. One big problem immediately sprang to my mind here: nowhere does it say exactly where this area lies, and there are no points of reference to other adventure/campaign modules as has happened before.



The three adventures are all static, but linked by the idea of a group of adventurers hired to clear a passage through a wood ready for a road-building team to follow, so that two strategic towns can be linked. For each adventure there are descriptions of NPCs (quite full, with notes on outlook, personality, motivation and so on), well-mapped and specified locations, and finally notes on the task involved and encounters which the GM can introduce. The maps, although well-drawn, are lacking in keys and labelling, making it a bit difficult to work out where different locations are.

The first adventure is relatively simple (aimed at beginning level characters) involving the titular trolls, with one or two interesting twists. The second adventure is somewhat more involved with more meat for the players to get their teeth into (erm... I thought that was what the *trolls* were meant to do...) and some interesting characters. The third adventure is the big 'set piece' finale. The player characters must be strong and lucky enough to survive the descent into Maes Fao in search of long-lost treasure; there are sinister lurkers in the gorge.

Although the adventures are quite good, there is something missing in this pack. Occasionally the language and ideas get somewhat childish (without the spirit of their inspiration, *The Hobbit*, whose trolls are both dangerous and humorous); and there is something perhaps less than original in its basis. Although useful for a GM without time to produce their own adventures, the module slips a little from the excellent standards previously set by ICE.

Graham Staplehurst

MEKTON & ROADSTRIKER
Robot Wargame/RPG & Vehicle Supplement
Talsorian Games £9.95 (Mekton) & £5.95 (Roadstriker)

For all you *anime* fans in Dwarfland, heeere's **Mekton**! *Anime* is what the Japanese call their giant robot cartoons, ye uninitiated. Toppling skyscrapers under its armoured feet, it advances across the desk, 11 inches tall and 100 pages of gleaming metallic destruction raising deadly weapons, ready to obliterate the helpless reviewer...

It's all done in the best possible taste, this *Mekton* - nice and easy to read, with a streak of humour running all the way through. We get straight on to the drawing board, and a section on Mek design that shows us how to build a Huge Robot just like in the cartoons. Nothing complicated here - your pilot starts off with a budget of 40 construction points and a warehouse full of interesting bits and can let his imagination run amok (within certain limits). All Meks have a *Torso, Limbs* come in pairs etc. For you power hungry dictators, the limit of constructions points may be set at whatever you prefer.

The game can be used as a means of staging Mek-combat if you wish, and it provides a simple but adequate combat system that reflects the screen action very well. Initiative, my usual gripe, is worked out before the fighting begins, based on the weight of your Mek (light ones act before heavier ones), and there's the option of adding a d10 to your side's Reaction speeds. Most weapons do a set number of Kills in damage (Meks have some many Hit Points that it's easier to work in Kills - 1 Kill = 10 Hits); exceptions are melee combat and Grappling, in which respectively damage is modified or extra options are available. Smartly done overall.

The roleplaying section deals with character creation (for which you can resort to a system of tables and die rolls if you're lazy or plain uninspired), occupations, a couple of handfuls of skills, roleplaying combat rules (man-to-man and expansions of Mek-to-Mek), personal improvement and the like. The books rounds out with a sourcebook for Algol (the authors' own world), and a very simple scenario.

Roadstriker expands the rules on multiform Meks, specifically vehicles, and reminds one a great deal of *Car Wars* in flavour. The history of transformables on Algol is studied, and the players get the chance to join the Mecha Police in a more involved scenario, *Arcadian Deathroad* - which kicks off in an episode entitled 'My *Anime* Vice'. Like I said, the best possible taste.

In all, a most worthwhile effort - not as slick as FASA's *Mechwarrior* or *Battletech*, but admirably simple and flexible.

Phil Frances

CRITICAL MASS

A regular book review column, written by Dave Langford

Bad Dreams

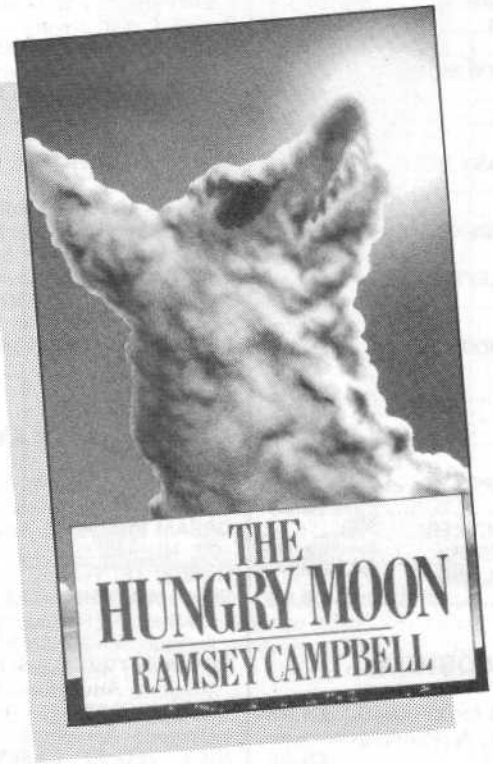
I rolled the dice and looked up the Critical Hits table, under *Spine*. 'Your review smashes brutally through the book's spine and ploughs on to carve a jagged smoking trail of destruction from pages 17 to 231. The shattered volume lies sundered at your feet, its future sales potential pumping uselessly forth from the severed arteries...' This effort to make my prose more tasteful comes courtesy of Paul Cockburn and a freebie copy of *Warhammer*, but I don't think I've mastered it yet.

Publishers currently love raw-horror novels thick with severed arteries, steaming entrails, and mutilated parts of the body which your editor won't let me mention: numbingly over-the-top stuff which leaves no room for the spider touch of fear. Ramsey Campbell's **The Hungry Moon** (Century 293pp £9.95) is very different, full of that dim uncertain moonlight where terrors breed. It has unnervingly realistic roots, beginning with a moorland village taken over by the sort of fundamentalists who frighten me: authoritarian, intolerant, glib Biblical answers for everything, and no time for that soppy New Testament stuff about love and charity. (These are the people who want to burn your D&D kit, folks.)

As a few sympathetic characters struggle in the tightening web of paranoia, the stage is set for a different brand of darkness to seep in from the moors. A particularly unpleasant Ancient Evil, with a taste for evangelists and full awareness of the possibilities of the nearby missile base... Even at his most apocalyptic, Campbell understates the horror and leaves your imagination to work, as in the epigraph: "...to fear the moon, to feed her as she must be fed, and never to look upon her feeding..." Definitely a book to make you draw the curtains and turn up the central heating.

Cheer up with Terry Pratchett's **Equal Rites** (Gollancz 200pp £9.95), his third screwy and dotty (but never, the author insists, wacky or zany) fantasy from the Discworld, about which so much has been said in *WD*. This time, an intermittently serious plot underlies the comic exuberance. A wizard passes on his staff and talent, as is traditional, to the (*seven plus one*)th son of a (*twice four*)th son. Unfortunately there's a tiny error in sex, and the young heroine finds herself equipped for a profession which has approximately as many vacancies for females as the Presidency of the USA. Her quest for equal rites at Unseen University produces plenty of funny one-liners, plus comic-horrible scenes with the Things from the Dungeon Dimensions, as described in the hideous *Necrotelecomnicon* or *Liber Paginarum Fulvarum:* 'The whole thing had a self-assembled look, as if the owner had heard about anatomy but couldn't quite get to grips with the idea.' Good fun.

Robert Sheckley reissues keep turning up: a new novel comes as a surprise. **Victim Prime** (Methuen 203pp £9.95) is a straight though sometimes tongue-in-cheek SF adventure, recycling Sheckley's favourite satirical theme of officially sanctioned combat to the death. By 2092 the world has fallen apart in a depressingly low-key way; our slow slide to extinction is enlivened only by bread-and-circuses spectacles like the Hunt — 'Killer' played for keeps in a holiday resort. It moves well enough, but despite ingenious ploys and counterploys has a touch of staleness: Sheckley imitating Sheckley. ('Poor fellow,' goes the gossip in the Reviewers' Club. 'Douglas Adams Syndrome, y'know...')



The Greenhill classic reprints keep coming: **Tourmalin's Time Cheques** by F Anstey (Greenhill 173pp £8.95) is the most interesting yet. I was boggled to note that this light-hearted fantasy of time-slips and paradoxes first appeared in 1885, ten years before Wells' *The Time Machine.* During a long sea voyage, Tourmalin gets the chance to deposit his boring shipboard hours in a Time Bank, to earn interest and be reclaimed when needed. When he cashes his time cheques he lives the hours he 'banked', but not in the right order: shipboard romances and scandals are hopelessly shuffled, and Anstey can only resolve things by a hoary literary device which appears in large print on this page. Otherwise, it's still fun. **Planetoid 127** by Edgar Wallace (Greenhill 148pp £8.95) is more for specialist collectors: a rare SF venture by the doyen of hack thrillers. Prof. Colson communicates via 'sound-strainer' with Earth's sister planet, hidden on the other side of the Sun (oh dear), and makes financial killings because stock market events there are 'echoed' here three days later, except sometimes...

Short Circuit (Sphere 186pp £2.50) is the book of the film by 'Colin Wedgelock' (said to be an SF author whose real name you would know). The gimmick is an unstoppable, laser-toting, missile-killing robot which as a result of the traditional Frankensteinian lightning bold 'comes alive' and decides that disassembling robots, or people, is a bad thing. Its new, self-programmed response to enemy attack is 'Run away, hide, telephone police!' I haven't seen the film, but the novelization is taut and funny: ultimate weapons which fancy themselves at disco dancing are OK by me.

John Tully's **NatFact 7** (Magnet 208pp £1.75) is another with topical things to say about politics. Its next-century Britain, not *too* unbelievable or nightmarish, features sharper distinctions than ever before between winners ('Qualified Citizens') and losers ('Nats' on permanent national service). Dissent bubbles over at Natfact 7, part open prison and part assembly line, with a familiar cast of undercover revolutionaries, fanatics, infiltrators and one ideologically unsound sceptic (about everything) who's the most appealing character. Following the old arguments about the justifiability of violence and ultimate worth of revolution, all ends in a state of realistic confusion with just a tiny gain for the forces of good... and Tully instructs you to think of your own moral. Punchy and hard-hitting for 'young adult' SF, but a little too slick for its own good.

Though not keen on T E D Klein's interminable horror novel *The Ceremonies,* I liked his **Dark Gods** (Pan 259pp £2.50) — four stories at just the traditional length for flesh-creeping yarns about the accursed blind things which inhabit New York's sewers but are never clearly seen, or the something which looks like a black man in scuba gear and is closing in on an old literary acquaintance of H P Lovecraft's. The atmosphere of urban sleaze works well: as with Ramsey Campbell, the supernatural fear gets a leg-up from existing nervousness about (say) the parts of town where you wouldn't walk after dark. Low Pavement, for example, in terror-haunted Nottingham.

Does anyone remember when Roger Zelazny was a hot new author who could do no wrong? The 1973 collection **The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth** (Methuen 271pp £2.50) brings it all back, with the famous title story and 14 more. Some are jokes or trivia, and a few personal favourites are omitted ('The Graveyard Heart', 'For a Breath I Tarry'), but there are enough goodies here to prove this author had magic in his typewriter, for a while...

Chris Drumm runs the smallest of small presses out in Iowa, producing neat and cheap booklets which are doomed to become sought-after collectors' edition: stories, essays, memoirs, bibliographies. The latest is a tiny literary autobiography from Nebula-winner Richard Wilson: **Adventures in the Space Trade** plus **A Richard Wilson Checklist** (Drumm 36pp $2, from Chris Drumm Books, PO Box 445, Polk City, Iowa 50226, USA). That's a post-free price (the John Sladek booklet *Love Among the Xoids* is only $1!)... if you can locate a couple of dollar bills in the first place.

And while I'm at it, don't forget Britain's SF magazine **Interzone** (£6/year to 124 Osborne Road, Brighton, BN1 6LU); and **Conspiracy '87**, the World SF Convention making its once-a-decade visit to these unAmerican shores: a week of desperate SF fun in Brighton on and around the August bank holiday (£25 to PO Box 43, Cambridge, CB1 3JJ... or SAE for details).

I rolled another 16 and consulted the table. 'The *White Dwarf* rejection slip slices blurringly through your pitiful ego defences to smash with maximum impact on your forebrain, splattering through unprotected grey matter and coating the surroundings up to a distance of 10′ with a thick spray of despair.' Oh, I shall never learn the subtleties of this.

Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay

The View from the Design Studio

Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay. Where to start... At the beginning, we suppose, with a set of Warhammer Fantasy Battle rules. **WFRP** was originally conceived as a supplement for *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*, rather than a game in its own right. Richard Halliwell and Rick Priestley, two of the leading lights of *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*, set to work on it, but it grew and grew until it became obvious that **WFRP** would have to be a game in its own right.

It was at some time after this that GW moved to Nottingham, and events elsewhere began to affect things. The establishment of the Games Workshop Design Studio provided Graeme Davis with a 'proper' job after four years of writing for anyone who waved a cheque at him, and Phil, Jim and Paul Cockburn arrived in quick succession from somewhere else ™. Jim, Phil and Graeme set to work on **WFRP** straight away, hacking lumps out, putting new lumps in, and generally making sure that it's own mother wouldn't recognise it by the time they finished. And so it was, that fateful November day, when **Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay** first crawled blinking into the 'wan autumn light...

So that's about how it happened (certain sections of this history have been compiled under the regulations governing the State of Emergency) - but how did **WFRP** get to be the way it is? Are you sitting comfortably? Then we'll begin...

The Old World

We decided from the start that **WFRP** had to have a world of its own. Without its own background, it would be just another fantasy rpg, and since the game itself relies so much on atmosphere (the term 'grubby fantasy' has been coined, to contrast with the 'shiny fantasy' which previously dominated roleplaying), the world is highly necessary in order to convey that atmosphere. The world of *WFB* had already been developing, in a general sort of way, and it seemed only logical to set the two games in the same world. So that's the broad outline of the world map settled, as well as a few placenames.

The next question to be answered was the level of technology. Most fantasy rpgs go for a stock Dark Age to High Mediaeval Mallory-Arthurian type of setting, but we thought that setting a slightly higher level of technology - late Mediaeval-early Renaissance - offered more possibilities, as well as a different and more satisfying atmosphere.

Finally, we decided that the culture - in the Old World at least - should have some basic similarities with Earth at the same level of technology. This was intended to make the world more accessible to players. A completely fantastic world - like the Glorantha of *RuneQuest*, for example - is an interesting setting, but because it is unfamiliar to the neophyte player; the player will not know things about the world which the character might be expected to know. We turned to history for our inspiration so that even novice players will have some idea of what the world is like.

A late Mediaeval setting is also well-suited to what we considered to be one of the main themes of the game - the rot of Chaos spreading from within. The Renaissance - particularly in north-west Europe - saw the first stirrings of the anti-witch hysteria which reached its fullest flowering in the following century. The Spanish Inquisition was in full cry, noblemen and others in many parts of Europe were experimenting with alchemy, and many other things were happening which could be used to add to the flavour of a fantasy world. Of course, these things could theoretically happen at any level of technology or stage of history, but coupled with the late Mediaeval level of technology they make for a particularly interesting world. It was for these reasons that the Old World was the first area to be developed as an adventuring background, although in time it is intended to cover most if not all parts of the **Warhammer** world, probably starting with Lustria.

Chaos

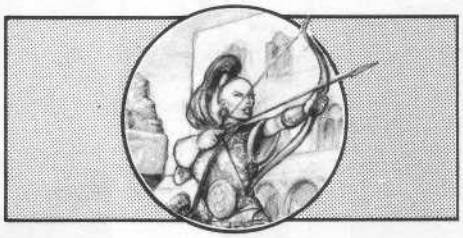
The Moorcockian concept of Chaos Gods, each with their own followers dedicated to the overthrow of reason and sanity also appealed to us. For one thing, it was an established part of the *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* background, and it also provided an instantly identifiable source of opponents for player characters. As well as the ravening hordes pouring out of the Chaos Wastes, there are secret cults within Human society, which can provide the basis for detective-type adventures, and pockets of Beastmen and mutants living as brigands in the extensive forests of the Old World, which can be used in more traditional hack-and-slay exercises. In addition to Chaos, there is the full complement of evil races - particularly the Goblins and their kin which are so popular among *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* players - allowing a greater choice of adventure types and locations.

Good and Evil

Some fantasy rpgs - notably *D&D/AD&D* - draw very clear black-and-white distinctions between good and evil, and this was something we wanted to avoid. Although **WFRP** does use an alignment system, which is regarded as an outdated concept by many gamers, it is not an integral part of the game; rather it is there for people who want to use it, and others can ignore it if they prefer. We were very conscious of the fact that for some people, **WFRP** would be the first roleplaying game they had bought, and the alignment system is a useful first step for building up the personality of a character. We tried, throughout the rulebook, to present all the information and mechanisms which would be required by the most exacting rules lawyer, while making it clear throughout that the GM is free to expand, change or even ignore sections of the rules which he/she doesn't feel fit his/her particular players and style of play.

The Careers System

It was decided from the start that **WFRP** would have a career system which avoided the usual Fighter/Cleric/Magic User/Thief stereotypes of *D&D/AD&D*, but which offered more in the way of colour and variety than the generalised 'Adventurer' of *RuneQuest*. The careers system was intended to convey the colour and variety of the Old World, and to help personalise characters, avoiding the state of affairs where one *n*th level Fighter is pretty much like another. Also, the careers system makes it easier for the GM to design NPCs - instead of everybody being a level 0 Fighter, as in *AD&D*, the GM can generate an NPC Rat Catcher or Grave Robber or whatever. We also tried to include different and interesting careers for the nonhuman PC races - Elves, Dwarfs and Halflings - to give them a little more personality than they have in some games, without overloading them with special abilities which make it a waste of time playing a Human character. For reasons of space, it was not possible to do this as thoroughly as we would have liked, but we hope in the future to develop this concept further. Trappings are included in basic careers to make character generation quicker and simpler, avoiding the need to spend half an hour poring over an equipment price list before the game proper can start, and for the same reason pregenerated characters are included in *The Oldenhaller Contract* and in each instalment of *The Enemy Within* campaign, so that play can begin immediately if desired.



The Combat System

This was developed from the combat system in *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*, with a greater level of detail as befits a roleplaying game. One thing we wnted to avoid was turning **WFRP** into a hack-and-slay game; while this is possible if you like that kind of game, we have designed most of our adventures so that combat takes a back seat to thought, investigation and role-playing. Not that combat isn't important - there are some situations where it is the only choice - but we wanted to produce a game that was more than just a set of one-to-one combat rules with a few skills and a world setting attached. We weren't afraid to make combat dangerous - it is in real life, after all, and the possibility of death or serious injury should make players think about non-violent solutions to problems. Hence, also, the graphic detail of the critical hit system - **Wounds** or hit points can be recovered in time, but replacing severed arms and legs is another matter.

At the same time, we wanted combat to be fast and easy to play, without the need to spend several minutes of each combat round feverishly looking for tables and charts, and the combat rules are intended to reflect this.

The Magic System

At an early stage, we decided that the magic system, like other main systems in **WFRP** had to be compatible with the *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* rules. This created problems in some cases - the *Magic Bridge* spell, for example, started out producing something that you could march a regiment over - but with a bit of development here and a bit of tweaking there we produced something which we hope is adequate for roleplaying while remaining compatible with the battle rules. Again for reasons of time and space, it was not possible to add very many new ideas on the magical side, but we hope to expand the magic system in the *Realm of Sorcery* supplement, which should be released sometime in '88. Watch this space.

Having seen some fantasy rpgs where magic dominates everything, we wanted to make sure that magic in **WFRP** was balanced and low-key, avoiding situations where characters get into an arms race with spells and magic items, which can detract from roleplaying. Also, we decided that evil magicians - Necromancers and Demonologists in particular - should have a price to pay for their power; like the followers of Chaos which are described in the forthcoming *Realm of Chaos*, these are easy roads to power, but they change and corrupt those who follow them.

Character Advancement

A common situation in career-based roleplaying games is the abstraction of training and skill increases; we tried to handle this in **WFRP** in such a way that it can be handled on an abstract level by those who want to - a character comes to a new adventure slightly better than before, having spent the time since the last adventure training - or played in full by those who want more detail - this approach is used in *Death on the Reik* and other instalments of *The Enemy Within* campaign.

Also, we favoured the idea of gradual improvement rather than gaining a whole batch of increases on crossing an arbitrary experience threshold, hence the notion of gaining skills and characteristic advances one at a time while pursuing a career. The career system also means that most characters have some way of earning a living between adventures, and may even use their careers to infiltrate guilds and other organisations during the course of an investigative adventure.

Skills

From an early stage, we were presented with the choice of a percentage-based skill system, as in the RuneQuest family of games, or once-and-for-all skills, which was the system we chose. We made this choice for the sake of simplicity and ease of play; rather than keeping track of individual scores in dozens of skills, a player needs only to list the skills and tell the GM when the character has a skill which will modify one of the characteristic tests on which the game is based. The characteristic test is the prime mechanic of the game, underlying everything else, and hopefully making play fast and simple while allowing great flexibility.

The Bestiary

Obviously, we had to include all the races and monsters which are listed in *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* as being present in the Old World, and we added a few more - most notably Carrion (for which we have to thank *Citadel Journal* reader Ian Harding), Fimir and Zoats - to give the game a little extra. We hope to add a few more in time, but we want to avoid the over-proliferation of monsters as has happened with *D&D* and *AD&D*.

The Oldenhaller Contract

It was decided from the first that the rulebook should contain an adventure, allowing play to start almost immediately. The first section of the adventure was written in numbered paragraphs, like a gamebook, to make it easier for an inexperienced GM to run, and once the GM had got the hang of things, the second part was set out in the more traditional area description style. We felt it was important to make the first adventure as easy as possible for an inexperienced GM to run successfully - after all, if a GM has trouble with the first adventure, what's the motivation to bother with any more?

The Enemy Within

Having decided what we wanted in the game, we then turned to the first few adventure packs. We decided to run a campaign rather than a series of one-off adventures, since this would give us the opportunity to develop a strong, world-shaking storyline and do full justice to the background. We decided that the adventure packs would be more than just adventures - each one would contain a mini-supplement, to expand the campaign background and to ensure that the adventure pack's usefulness

would outlive its playing time. Thus, *The Enemy Within* has expanded background information on the history and political structure of The Empire, *Shadows over Bogenhafen* has a complete medium-sized town which can be re-used as an adventure setting, and *Death on the Reik* has a section of expanded rules dealing with boats and river travel.

The Enemy Within campaign is set in The Empire, an area with many similarities to late Mediaeval Germany, because this is the area which excited us most when we were developing the world background for the rulebook, and because it best suited the kind of storyline we wanted to write - what better place for gothic adventures than a gothic nation. The storyline is constructed so that the adventures can be played on their own, although they will be more enjoyable if played as a sequence, and builds from traces of isolated nests of Chaos cultists to a shattering climax as the adventurers fight to save The Empire itself. All the time, things are happening in other places which may affect the adventurers later on - there's a 'real' world out there, and life goes on and events take place even when the adventurers aren't there.

As with *The Oldenhaller Contract*, we included pregenerated characters to cut down the set-up time, and we will be putting these characters in all the adventures in the campaign - suitably developed as the campaign goes on, of course. But that doesn't mean that you can't use your own charcters - they are only there for convenience.

We also intend to include a poster-size map in every adventure pack - *The Enemy Within* has a map of the western half of The Empire, *Shadows over Bogenhafen* has a colour map of the town, and *Death on the Reik* has a map of the castle where the climax of the adventure takes place. We know that people like colour maps, and we feel that they add something to the adventure pack as a whole, helping to bring the world to life.

Jim Bambra, Graeme Davis, Phil Gallagher, Rick Priestley, and Richard Halliwell

DEREK the TROLL

A SOLITARY FIGURE SLOWLY WENDS ITS WAY ACROSS AN EMPTY LAND. WITH IT LIES THE ONLY HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF A DYING RACE...
...FOR A THOUSAND YEARS THE OLD ONES HAD RULED THIS LAND A KIND AND GENTLE RACE, THEIR SHAMBLING EXTERIORS BELAYING THEIR BENIGN INTELLIGENCE...
IT WAS THE MYSTICAL RITUALS OF THE OLD ONES THAT HAD KEPT THE WORLD IN A BALANCE OF PEACE AND HARMONY WITH ITSELF SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME...
BUT NOW THEIR POWER IS WANING. THE ONLY THING WHICH CAN SAVE THEM FROM CERTAIN EXTINCTION IS A MAGICAL CRYSTAL WHOSE POWERS WOULD ENSURE THAT THE OLD ONES WOULD FLOURISH FOR ANOTHER THOUSAND YEARS
THUD THE BARBARIAN
THIS CRYSTAL WAS THE BURDEN OF THE TRAVELLER ON HIS LONG, TIRING JOURNEY ACROSS THE DESERTS, PLAINS AND MOUNTAINS OF THIS FABLED LAND
OH WOW MAN! I'M GETTING SOME PRETTY HEAVY VIBES OFF THOSE TWO DUDES OVER THERE!
WHAT A BUMMER! I'LL HAVE TO SNEAK PAST THEM BEHIND THAT TREE! HEAVEEEY!
TCHAG!
HA! SEE – BULLSEYE! NOW GET THE BEER IN!
RATS!
© CARL CRAMPTON 1987

WITH A PINCH OF SALT

Zombies in Call of Cthulhu
by Marcus L. Rowland

One of the horrors facing anyone who investigates the Cthulhu Mythos is the discovery that many apparently absurd legends are true. One example is the tale of the zombie, an undead human obeying the will of the conjurer who resurrected it. Zombies feature in the legends of many cultures, but are shrouded in so many myths that the truth is extremely hard to find. This problem is complicated by the fact that there are several distinct types of zombie, each showing different features and possessing different strengths and vulnerabilities, and furthermore that there is a form of insanity which induces zombie-like behaviour.

'DEATH' IN LIFE - THE HISTORICAL ZOMBIE

There are many tales of men and women becoming zombies by enchantment, passing from life to living death with little warning. Such creatures are slack-featured, emotionless, move slowly, and seem incapable of understanding anything beyond the most simple instructions. Their masters (usually powerful medicine men) use them for farming and simple labouring tasks where their slow reactions and clumsiness will not be a handicap, and may become immensely rich on the profits of zombie labour. Sometimes, but only very rarely, such zombies will apparently recover and escape from their masters, though their recovery may never be complete.

This form of zombie isn't dangerous in itself, but is a frightening warning of the power of the controlling sorcerer. The population of the surrounding area know that they can also be turned into zombies, and will rarely dream of defying the magician. Some isolated areas may be completely dominated by such zombie lords, though most of the population will remain normal since they are better able to serve their master in this form. For example, a gang of ten or so zombies would probably be led by a normal human. Human followers of a zombie lord are much more dangerous than the zombies themselves; many gain wealth and status from their master's power over zombies, and will fight to protect their position.

Keeper's Notes

This form of zombie is well-documented, with several real cases scientifically explained. Natural poisons are capable of inducing a prolonged state in which the victim effectively has no will. Given a sufficiently large dose the victim will never recover. Synthetic drugs with similar effects, and therapies to counter some of these poisons, were discovered in the 1970s and 1980s, but some of these drugs are still extremely obscure. In a 1920s campaign the cause and treatment of this condition will be a complete mystery; in any campaign the cause may be something very different, a genuine manifestation of magic or the Cthulhu Mythos.

The mechanism of this form of zombie 'recruitment' is fairly simple. Servants of the zombie master find a suitable victim and slip an initial dose of the poison into food or drink. It may also be delivered by poisoned arrow or dart, as a cloud of inhaled dust, or by more conventional injection. This initial dose leaves the victim docile and suggestible, ready to follow the recruiters to their master. Later the victim is given a larger dose under conditions designed to heighten suggestibility. For example, the victim might be taken to a prolonged religious ceremony, and fed the drug at intervals during the ritual. By participating in chants and rhythmic movements the victim falls deeper under the control of the magician

If the process is primarily chemical this ceremonial element is not an essential part of the process; it simply helps to 'program' the zombie for its role as a living automaton. 'Scientific' zombie masters may simply use hypnotism or other forms of conditioning instead. If control is enforced magically the ceremony is vital, used to gather power to suppress the victim's will. The initial drug dose is simply used to keep the victim in a trance state until the spell can be cast. In either case occasional reinforcement of the treatment may be needed to keep the victims' will suppressed, but this will be at intervals of weeks or months. Sometimes the effect will be truly permanent, only reversible by powerful drugs or magic.

Living 'zombies' have no initiative, and will continue actions (eg, filling a tub from a well) until directed to perform a new activity. They won't try to obey orders in ways that leave them at an advantage, or twist them to find loopholes in instructions. They can't explain their conditions; usually they can't talk at all.

Game Mechanics

Each form of living zombification takes place in two stages, the first being a dose of poison. This initial dose is a 2d6 + 2 potency poison against CON. It takes effect after 1d4 rounds. If the poison overcomes CON then POW is effectively reduced to 1; the victim has no free will, and will obey any instruction. DEX is also reduced by 1d6. If the poison fails to overcome CON, POW is reduced by half the potency of the poison; the victim becomes more suggestible, and must roll against 5xPOW to resist orders, again losing 1d6 DEX. Both effects last 1d3 + 1 hours; when the poison wears off the victim regains a point of POW per 2d4 minutes, but feels ill and sluggish for at least 20-Con hours after it wears off. DEX won't be recovered without several hours' sleep. An immediate and successful attempt to Treat Poison halves POW and DEX losses.

Occasionally recruitment begins with a magical attack, which drains POW and leaves the victim vulnerable to suggestion, rather than poisoning. In such cases the magician should match magic points against the victim; if the victim is overcome orders will be obeyed until the magician releases the spell, at the cost of a magic point an hour. This is comparatively rare, since it brings the magician into direct contact with the victim and has no effect if the spell fails.

If zombification is primarily chemical, the ritual which follows involves repeated doses of a more powerful drug, once every 5 + 1d6 minutes. The drug is a potency 10 poison, each dose reducing POW by 1d4 and DEX by 1d4, halved if the poison is resisted. Zombie masters who are experienced with these drugs can continue the ritual until the victim's personality is completely suppressed (POW drops to 1), and won't be fooled by attempts to fake zombification. As a by-product of the loss of POW all magic points are lost.

For the equivalent magical ritual the magician must use personal magic points to overcome the victim's magic points. Once successful, the magician and accomplices can pool magic points against the victim. During a 3d6 minute period of preparation each participant in the ritual is required to donate up to three magic points to the spell caster. Each time the victim's magic points are overcome the victim loses 1d4 POW and 1d2 DEX. The procedure is repeated at intervals of 3d6 minutes until the victim is reduced to 1 POW. Again, all magic points are lost. Magicians using spells of this type lose 1d4 SAN on the first casting, none thereafter.

Once either treatment is complete there is a period of 2d10 + 10 days in which no POW can be regained. After this there is a cumulative 1% per day chance (to a maximum of 20%) of player characters

regaining 1 POW; NPCs will rarely recover unaided. Once POW begins to return the victim can attempt to disobey orders or escape; only one attempt can be made per day, on a roll against 5xPOW. Naturally zombie masters are alert for signs of returning willpower, and will repeat the treatment as often as seems necessary. Magic-using zombie masters may even be able to cast the spell at long range, though the number of magic points used to suppress POW should be doubled.

Optional Rule: If the victim isn't rescued and doesn't escape there is a cumulative 1% chance per week (after the first month) of permanent brain damage, removing a point of POW and 1d2 INT. Once this occurs the keeper should continue to roll for damage each week, but should not increase the chance of damage. Damage continues until POW and INT are reduced to 1.

If living zombies are rescued they can be treated medically or by psychotherapy; either approach requires difficult research and library work to have any effect, especially in a 1920s campaign. Use the normal rules for psychotherapy and institutional disasters.

Victims of either form of living zombification lose 2d6 SAN during the zombification ritual (or 1d3 SAN if a SAN roll is made), and will remember everything experienced during the period without willpower. This means that any encounters with Cthuhloid creatures and other horrors have their cumulative SAN effect when zombification ends! However, the delay will do something to cushion the blow of such experiences, and all such SAN losses should be halved.

Unexpected encounters with this type of zombie may cause the loss of 1d2 SAN, no loss if a SAN roll is made. The effect of seeing a loved one or friend in this form may cause the loss of 1d6 SAN (1 point if a SAN roll is successful), recovered if the victim can be rescued and cured. Statistics for such zombies are the same as those for any normal human, with the exception that POW is effectively reduced to zero, INT and EDU can't be used, and DEX is greatly reduced. Such zombies can't fight, and are more to be pitied than feared in themselves. If attacked they take normal damage, and can't dodge or parry.

'LIFE' IN DEATH - THE TRADITIONAL ZOMBIE

The traditional zombie is a genuine manifestation of the supernatural, a dead man or woman brought back to a semblance of life by sorcery. It's often assumed that the sorcerer responsible for such effects must always be evil; however, some neutral or benign magicians may also have mastered this process, though it's unlikely that this can be accomplished without some loss of SAN. Magicians who try to master this ability will probably drift towards evil, becoming involved in more and more dangerous spells and the terrifying horrors of the Cthulhu Mythos. The most damaging aspect of this spell is that it is apparently most successful with recently deceased corpses; the magician is thus drawn to become involved in graverobbing and other ghoulish activities, and ultimately to ritual murder.

Superficially the traditional zombie resembles the living 'zombies' described above, and it's easy to confuse the two. However, the traditional zombie is permanently dead; if the spell which reanimates it is removed it will instantly 'die', and cannot be animated again. There are many variant forms, some hardly recognisable as zombies; if sufficient power is put into the spell the zombie will seem most normal, and casual observers may think that it is still alive.

Although the preparation of a zombie usually begins with a corpse, it's possible to begin with a living human who is murdered in the course of the zombification process. Such ritual murders are said to aid the magic, and magicians controlling many zombies of this type will almost certainly use this form of 'recruitment'.

Many legends suggest means of killing zombies of this type; the most common involves the use of salt, but there is little real evidence to support this story. Investigators will probably need to deal with the creatures on an individual basis, experimenting to find the best answer.

Keeper's Notes

Zombies of this type will probably be found under much the same circumstances as the living 'zombies' described above, and both types may occasionally be found together. If the zombies are reanimated natural deaths there's a slim chance that they may be ruled by a neutral or benign magician; however, it's more likely that those encountered in the course of *Call of Cthulhu* will have been created violently.

Zombie 'recruitment' for this type of ritual follows much the same procedure as described above. Usually it's more convenient to commit murder at a prepared site, rather than to kill victims during an abduction, so the same techniques of poisoning and abduction are used. The follow-up ceremony, though, is very different. The victim is ritually prepared then murdered (usually by slashing an artery), drained of blood, and converted to a zombie before rigor mortis sets in. Usually some form of embalming or preservative treatment is used to keep the corpse from deteriorating; in more primitive cultures this step may be omitted, and such zombies will soon decay, rotting and crawling with maggots and releasing a choking odour of death.

Zombies of this class are permanently dead, and require little or no 'maintenance', though the magician may occasionally need to cast a spell to maintain animation. Some magicians may become quite attached to their zombie servants, buying them new clothing and sewing back any parts that fall off. Such magicians are usually insane.

Zombies may also be created by a form of resurrection, but this is more difficult and rarely produces a satisfactory servant. It's generally carried out only by 'white' magicians and those who aren't prepared to commit murder.

Game Mechanics

The most common form of traditional zombie is described in the *Call of Cthulhu* Sourcebook for the 1920s (p30 in first and second edition copies, p121 in the hardcover edition). The distinctive features of these creatures are enhanced strength and resistance to damage.

Preliminary recruitment follows the same pattern described above, with the victim's POW and free will suppressed.

The zombification ceremony consists of three stages, the first being summoning of magical energy as described above. Once the magician has some magic points in hand the ritual murder begins; the magician or an acolyte cuts an artery, and the victim begins to bleed to death, losing a hit point every 1d3 minutes. As blood is lost, the magician makes successive attempts to pit magic points against the victim's POW, at intervals of 1d6 minutes. If this attempt is unsuccessful the victim dies without becoming a zombie. If the attempt succeeds a point of POW remains in the body after death, keeping it alive.

At this stage the magician must establish control. The zombie will still have INT, though the last traces of consciousness will fade in INT x 1d6 minutes. The magician must establish that he (or she) is the master, pitting magic points against the victim's single point of POW. This is a comparatively easy process, but may require several attempts (at intervals of 2d3 minutes) to succeed. Victims 'rescued' during this part of the ceremony will believe that they are still alive, and may join in to fight the magician. If the magician is killed or driven off without establishing control the zombie will eventually lose all INT and run amok.

Once control is complete the zombie can be treated to prevent decay; usually this involves steeping in a chemical bath or the use of a minor spell to keep the body fresh. Generally this procedure is left to underlings while the magician recovers from the ritual. If the magician wants the zombie to look more human, additional magic points must be expended; for example, an additional 5 points might give the zombie some vaguely human expression in its face, though not much.

The only alternative to violent zombification is the use of a variant of the Resurrection spell described in the *Call of Cthulhu* rules. For this spell the body need not be destroyed, but will be reactivated in the state in which it died, and can never be anything more than a mindless zombie. The spell costs 1d10 SAN on first casting, 1d3 SAN per casting thereafter, and 1d6 magic points per casting, plus a point for each day the body has been dead.

Although omitted from the *Call of Cthulhu* rules, encounters with this type of zombie should affect SAN; 1d2 on first encounter with an obvious zombie (unless

a SAN roll is made), a 1d2 SAN loss (SAN roll negates) if an apparent human is positively identified as a zombie. Finding a friend or loved one converted to a zombie should cost 1d6 SAN.

REANIMATION

In this scientific equivalent of zombification, the scientist uses arcane chemical and electrical processes to restore a semblance of life to a corpse, and may even assemble parts of several corpses to form a body which is then reanimated. Often the creature formed will be very like the traditional zombie described above, and scientists may feel that they have successfully created or restored life. However, it seems more likely that such scientists are unconsciously using magic to sustain life after death, with many of the trappings of scientific resurrection (towering machines with flashing lights, elaborate chemical baths, and powerful electrical discharges) simply acting to focus the scientist's will and magic points. The behaviour traditionally associated with such experimentation consists of a period of research, followed by frenzied laboratory work, building up to a climax which eventually leaves the scientist tired and drained; it's possible that the scientist feels drained because he or she has unconsciously performed a powerful feat of magic.

Reanimators are often forced to associate with grave robbers or resort to murder to ensure a supply of fresh corpses, and their research will often lead to more intimate and eventually self-destructive contact with the Cthulhu Mythos. It often seems as though some destructive creature (possibly Nyarlathotep) delights in granting these reanimators enough knowledge to ensure partial success, which leads them to dabble on the fringes of the Mythos. The creatures they create are rarely controllable, and are frequently the cause of the scientists' destruction.

Keeper's Information

Reanimation is an extremely complex procedure requiring years of research and study. Scientists wishing to perfect the process should have a minimum total of 200% skill in three or more relevant sciences; for example, Chemistry, Pharmacy, and Zoology. Given these minimum qualifications, such scientists must spend at least fifty percent of their waking time in studies and research work. For each six-month period in which this course of study is followed, the scientist should make a Library Use roll. If successful the scientist gains 1d6% knowledge in a new skill, **Reanimation**, and must make a SAN roll or lose 1d2 SAN. Certain rare books may be used to enhance this ability, in the same way that Mythos books can improve Cthulhu Mythos knowledge, with an increased chance of SAN loss. For example, Herbert West's research notes might give 15% Reanimation knowledge, if a successful Reanimation skill roll was made, but the reader would lose 2d6 SAN (1d3 SAN if a SAN roll was made). Often books containing Reanimation lore will also touch upon the Cthulhu Mythos, with consequent additional SAN loss. The exact nature of such works is left to the keeper.

Reanimation research also tends to be extremely expensive; as scientists learn more they will try to assemble more elaborate laboratory equipment, and junk old and discredited technology. Scientists involved in this research should expect to spend approximately $500 (£100 at '20s rates) for each 1% of Reanimation knowledge, in equipment and materials, plus a minimum of $500 plus (50 x Reanimation rating) dollars per year in supplies, maintenance, and other expenses. For example, a professor with 50% reanimation knowledge would have spent $25,000 (£5,000) on equipment and other permanent facilities, over the course of several years, and would have running expenses of around $3,000 (£600) per year. On a professor's wages this could easily be a severe problem; devising a suitable grant application and cover story may be the hardest part of the reanimation research.

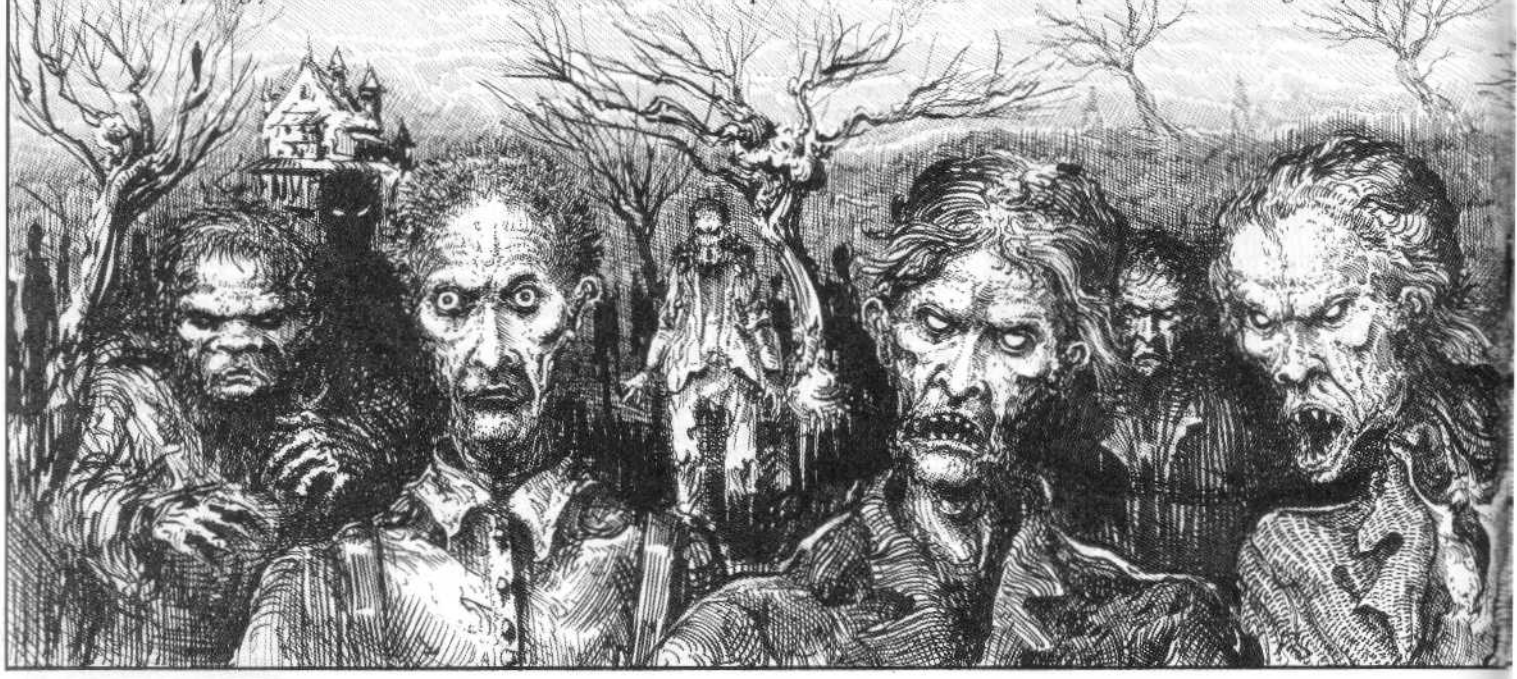
Reanimation experiments may be attempted at any stage of a reanimator's career, with the chance of success equivalent to Reanimation skill. Usually only one attempt is possible in any given six-month period; the rest of the time is spent on small scale and animal experiments, and in attempts to get hold of the components (such as freshly-deceased human corpses) needed for the work. Successful reanimation experiments don't necessarily lead to the creation of a complete zombie. In the early stages they are more likely to produce useful information which adds 1d4 to Reanimation knowledge for the next round of research and experimentation, and costs 1d6 Magic Points and 1d3 SAN (1 SAN if a SAN roll is made).

The keeper should decide if these experiments will ever be allowed to succeed, and determine the consequences of success. Usually a reanimated corpse will resemble the 'traditional' zombie described above, though in some cases it will seem to have a genuine personality. Such cases may, however, be caused by possession, as described below. In either case removal of the magic or possessing spirit which keeps the body animated will result in instant and permanent death. SAN effects are as the 'traditional' zombie.

POSSESSION

Sometimes a corpse may be animated by the spirit of another being. The motives of such interlopers can vary from malevolence to curiosity; often they are totally alien. The sophistication of their imitation of human life varies with the intelligence and power of the invading spirit. In some cases the resulting creature is little more than a zombie, in others the invading presence is so powerful that there is no easy way of spotting the deception. Powerful sorcerers (and possibly scientific reanimators) may be able to capture such entities and use them to animate their zombies; if so, they will usually be programmed to obey their 'creators' commands.

In some cases these creatures may be responsible for the deaths of their host bodies, as part of some sinister (or wholly incomprehensible) plan requiring their presence on Earth. If the possessing spirit is driven out the body will remain dead; in cases of possession of a living body the host



Illustrated by Ian Miller

personality remains present but is dormant until the intruder is driven out.

Keeper's Information

Possession of a corpse will occur if a human is killed under circumstances favourable to the invading entity involved; for example, someone killed in a temple sacred to Cthugha might be invaded by a Fire Vampire. In general, possession is only possible where the invading personality isn't firmly tied to a physical body. In the above example, a Fire Vampire is essentially a shifting formless cloud of gas whose composition will continually change, and the controlling essence will be a very small part of the cloud. The Great Race of Yith may occasionally use this method, when their telepathic time travel 'tunes in' to someone as they are killed; this would be a very rare occurrence, since there is evidence that the Great Race have servants who research the lifeline of their human hosts before invading them.

Directed possession (summoning a Mythos creature and directing it to occupy a corpse) requires knowledge of the appropriate Summoning and Binding spells, and a ritual comparable to the creation of the traditional zombie described above. In this case there is no need to drain blood or suppress the victim's POW; the victim is simply killed as soon as the summoning is successful, and the summoned spirit takes control of the fresh corpse. For this technique the body needs to be as fresh and intact as possible, and the masters of this technique have perfected quick and painless attacks which leave easily repairable damage. In many cases these involve use of the Martial Arts skill described in *Masks of Nyarlathotep*. Other possible methods include drowning, freezing, or suffocation, though the first two would be very inappropriate for a Fire Vampire!

Although the invading spirit is bound to the host corpse, it isn't necessarily under the control of the magician or scientist who summons it; it may be necessary to perform another binding ritual to keep the zombie under control.

Zombies created by this technique will have the INT, POW, and DEX of the invading spirit, and the STR, CON, and SIZ of the host corpse. The invading spirit has full knowledge of all spells, and may have powers related to those of the invading spirit. For example, a human corpse possessed by a Fire Vampire spirit might have the power of pyrokinesis, causing fires without physical contact.

Zombies created by possession are probably the most dangerous type. Luckily they rarely make loyal servants, though it's possible that such a zombie might be created at the instigation of the invading spirit, as part of some complex plan of destruction.

Another form of possession is mind swapping, used by the Great Race of Yith and some other creatures. In this form the personalities from two bodies are swapped. Usually this is permanent, though sometimes it's possible to swap back. Some powerful magicians can transfer their own personalities this way, swapping bodies with a younger host to achieve a form of immortality. Usually a prerequisite is a ritual or drug to suppress the victim's POW; exact details are beyond the scope of this article.

PARASITISM

Sometimes a corpse may be reanimated by an invading disease or parasite which is capable of reactivating the body. Such reanimated corpses are usually 'programmed' for stereotyped behaviour which will help spread the infection, such as the murder of uninfected humans. This type of infection may also be controlled by a sufficiently resourceful magician or scientist, and the disease might thus be used to kill victims and convert them directly into zombies.

Keeper's Information

Infection is most effective in isolated areas with poor communication; in such areas the disease may get a firm hold before anyone realises what is happening. The disease will usually be vulnerable to some natural or synthetic cure, such as modern antibiotics; there's no need for the keeper to make such a cure easy to find. If the disease is cured the patient dies, since the infection only affects dead tissues. Infection may cause the host body to become unnaturally strong, much like the traditional zombie described above.

AUTOMATISM

One final cause of zombie-like behaviour is automatism, a form of insanity in which the mind 'switches off', leaving the body repetitively performing some simple action. Usually these actions have some relevance to the events which caused the insanity; a victim might go through the motions of drawing and firing a gun, raising the hands to ward off an attacker, and so on. Such 'automatons' can often be made to perform different activities, such as sweeping a floor or polishing a table. Once a pattern of movement is established it will be continued indefinitely, even if circumstances change; for example, sweeping movements would be continued even if the broom was taken away. Sometimes automatism is associated with phobias and other forms of insanity.

Keeper's Information

'Automatons' can be made to perform actions by moving their hands and pushing them through the correct sequence. After a few repetitions the movements will continue spontaneously. Victims of automatism can sometimes be cured by psychotherapy, using the normal rules for treatment and institutional disasters.

In general, automatism is a fairly random effect of insanity; it's unlikely that a zombie work force of the type described above could be recruited by driving victims insane in this way. However, it's possible that some Mythos creatures may be able to induce this effect deliberately. It's also possible that genuine zombies might be disguised as automatons; for example, as inmates of an asylum run by Cultists. Automatism is a particularly appropriate form of insanity for anyone driven insane by seeing zombies or witnessing a zombification ritual.

Night of Blood

An Adventure for Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay

by Jim Bambra

ILLUSTRATED BY RUSS NICHOLSON

***Night of Blood** is set in The Empire and can easily be used as part of **The Enemy Within** campaign. It can also be used as part of any other campaign or for a one-off game.*

This adventure can take place at any roadside or riverside location away from the large cities. It can be used to add colour to either a road or river journey. The journey should have been uneventful, but as dusk approaches, a storm suddenly breaks. Soon the adventurers are wet through and their coach or barge is being buffeted by strong winds, making it very hazardous to continue. Unfortunately, this being The Empire, it is not safe simply to stop and wait for the storm to pass. Many strange creatures live in the forest, and few of these are likely to be sheltering from the storm.

The rain falls in torrents from the dark, roiling clouds. Overhead, lightning flashes across the sky. In the distance the strangled cry of some strange creature can be heard. It is a night to be indoors, for who knows what lurks under dark trees in The Empire's forests.

•THE HUNT•

Audible between the rumbles of thunder is a strangled baying. At first this seems to be in the distance, but soon it becomes apparent that the sound is heading towards the adventurers. A group of beastmen and mutants are hunting a stag in this part of the forest.

If the adventurers decide to halt their journey, the cries of the beastmen swing straight towards them after about half an hour and approach at a fast rate. The cries stop suddenly before they reach the adventurers as the beastmen pull down their prey, and the forest falls silent but for the sound of the storm. It is only a matter of time before the beastmen become aware of the adventurer's presence...

Sensible adventurers will continue their journey at this point. Those who stay notice strange shapes lurking at the edge of their vision. The beastmen and mutants observe the characters for a few minutes and take the opportunity to surround them if this is possible. They then rush into the attack. If the adventurers decide to retreat have them make *Ride, Drive Cart* or *River Lore* tests (as appropriate) to escape. Failure of these tests results in a battle with the beasts of Chaos. Unless the adventurers move on similar attacks occur throughout the night.

The Chaos hunters (two beastmen and four mutants) attempt to overpower the adventurers and then dispose of them in their own inimitable fashion. The mutants flee if both the beastmen are slain or incapacitated unless they succeed in a successful **Ld** test.

2 CHAOS BEASTMEN

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4/6	41	25	3	4	11	30	1	30	29	24	29	24	10

The first Beastman has a large bovine head and tough scaly skin (2 AP on each part of its body). It is also *subject to frenzy*. It adds 1 to all damage it inflicts and subtracts 1 from each wound it receives. When the attack begins it lets out a bellowing shriek and charges into combat, oblivious for its own safety. It is armed with a sword and fights until slain or incapacitated.

The other Beastman has long, dog-like legs (**M** 6). It presents a mockery of human form, with a tall emaciated body surmounted by an oversize dog's head. The creature uses no weapons, attacking with its sharp teeth.

4 CHAOS MUTANTS

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	33	25	3	3	6	30	1	29	29	29	29	29	16

Two of the mutants are armed with daggers, and the other two with clubs.

The four mutants resemble normal humans, but each bears some mark of Chaos. One has eyestalks which bob around its head rather than eyes, another has two tentacles which sprout from its hands. The remaining two mutants are covered in thick fur which provides them with 1 AP on their bodies and arms.

•MOVING ON•

Whether they are attacked or not, the adventurers are able to make reasonable progress for about half an hour. After that the road is so badly waterlogged or the river so dangerously swollen that travel is reduced to a crawl. On the river strong cross winds and floating debris make it very hazardous to continue. *Ride, Drive Cart* or *River Lore* tests are required to avoid a mishap of some sort. Road travellers find their horses slipping in the mud and going lame or vehicles becoming bogged down in the mire. River vessels are swept out of control and crash into the bank. With the heavy rain and the threat of mutant attacks, it should be obvious to that they the adventurers are in a bad situation.

•THE HOODED MAN INN •

Suddenly lightning illuminates a building in the middle distance. Once the lightning has pinpointed its position,

lights can be seen burning in the windows. This is the Hooded Man, a coaching/riverside inn, a welcome sight to any weatherworn traveller, especially on such a foul night.

The main gates are closed and securely locked. Knocking at the gates brings no response, leaving the adventurers the choice of climbing over the wall or finding another means of entry. Fortunately, access is possible from the nearby ferry where a pathway leads to the inn itself.

•THE FERRY•

This is a small building next to the river bank. The ferry itself consists of a raft which can be winched across the river by means of ropes. When the ferry is not in use, these ropes lie below the surface of the water. The raft is on the adventurers' side of the river, but any attempts to winch it across to the other side are futile as the ropes have been cut.

If they check out the ferry building, the adventurers find that the door is open and there are signs of a struggle inside. The building's furniture is overturned and there is no sign of a ferry keeper. A close search turns up a bag containing 12 GC, 42 shillings and 15 pennies. A trail of fresh blood leads from the door; any character examining this who succeeds in an **Int** test realises that a body has been dragged out of the building. However, no sign of a trail can be found outside thanks to the heavy rain and the mud.

•THE INN•

The Hooded Man is a small inn along a road that crosses the river here at the ferry. It is similar to the one in the Warhammer Rule book, but is not as grand. See **WFRP** p328 for basic details regarding inns.

At one time the inn's site was a meeting place for cultists, but they were driven from the area over one hundred years ago. However, the authorities failed to find a secret shrine to the Chaos God Tzeentch which was hidden under the cellar. Since then the inn's history has been forgotten by all but the Writhers in the Dark, a Chaos cult worshipping Tzeentch. Unknown to the current landlord, the ruins of the Chaos shrine are still there...

Tonight the Hooded Man has been successfully attacked by a group of mutants working in concert with Hans Jinkerst, a Chaos cultist. He has been sent to the area by the Writhers in the Dark to reconsecrate the shrine. Disguised as a Roadwarden, Hans entered the inn and at an opportune moment slipped kurts (a sleep-inducing drug, see below) into the evening's food. Once the inn's staff and visitors fell asleep - or were too drowsy to resist - he opened the main gates for the mutants.

All has gone well for the mutants. The inn and the adjacent ferry were quickly captured and the defenders were overcome. The survivors are now locked in the cellar, awaiting the moment when they will be sacrificed to Tzeentch. Hans and the mutants are now celebrating their victory and preparing for a ceremony to summon the shrine's guardian. The mutants are, however, unprepared for any visitors, and they are surprised by the adventurers' appearance. Their initial reaction is to masquerade as the inn's inhabitants and wait for an opportunity to offer the the adventurers a drugged meal.

HANS JINKERST - CULTISTS

Hans is a Charlatan and a master of deception. He can easily carry off his part of a Roadwarden. Unfortunately for him, however, his uniform has a bloodstain at the base of his back where the original owner was stabbed. If this is noticed by the adventurers (a successful *Observe* test is required by someone in a position to notice it) Hans maintains that it happened earlier this evening when he was attacked by two bandits. On no account will he allow anyone to examine his 'wound' beneath.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	38	32	3	4	8	49	1	54	55	46	48	32	51

Skills
Acting
Blather
Charm
Disguise
Evaluate
Mimic
Palm Object
Public Speaking
Read/Write

Equipment
Dagger
Sword
Mail Shirt (1 AP on body)
34 GC
A glass phial containing 18 doses of kurts (see below)

THE MUTANTS

All of the mutants have the following profile, although they have individual mutations. Should a fight start they have access to swords and clubs, or they carry them at all times.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
3	33	25	3	3	6	30	1	29	29	29	29	29	16

Grat is initially in the stables eating the remains of the stable boy. If he is still alive, he joins the other mutants during the ceremony to summon the shrine's guardian. He has suckers on the ends of his spider-like legs which allow him to cling to any surface with ease.

Otto the 'landlord' is fat to such an extreme degree that he is as wide as he is tall. He seems to roll along rather than walk, but he is passable as a human being. Because he has no other noticeable mutation - and all landlords are a bit on the portly side - Otto adopts the role of landlord when the adventurers arrive.

Fagor can pass for a normal human, as his bulging eyes are unusual, but not unknown, among men. He is in the cellar or the bar room when the adventurers arrive at the Hooded Man.

Wilhem is the most repulsive and grotesque of all the mutants. He doesn't have a proper face, merely a skull. As a result, anyone viewing Wilhem for the first time must make a Cool test or become **subject to fear** (see **WFRP** p68).

Outer Wall - The inn is surrounded by a 12-foot high wooden wall. The main gate is locked and barred from the inside, the smaller gate leading to the ferry is, however, open.

The Stables - Approaching the stables, the adventurers will be aware that the horses are restless. Loud neighs and kicks can be heard coming from the stables.

Grat, one of the mutants (see below for statistics), is in the hayloft. He is feasting on the body of one of the stable boys and will not hear the adventurers approach. He notices their presence as soon as the door is opened.

The six horses in the stables are terrified by Grat's presence and flee from the stables as soon as the door is opened. A character making a successful *Animal Care* test will be able to prevent this happening, but any other character runs the risk of being trampled by the leading horse. A successful **I** test allows the character to leap out of the way. Anyone who is trampled takes one **S** 3 hit in

the leg (modified by *Toughness* and armour) as the horses escape into the yard. The horses can only be persuaded or forced to re-enter the stables if they are calmed and lead by a character with *Animal Care* skill.

As soon as he is aware that somebody else is in the stables, Grat climbs onto the roof and hides on the other side of the roof ridge. Characters climbing into the hayloft find the damp corpse of the stable boy. He has been killed by a sword blow to the head and his right arm bears the marks of Grat's teeth.

Water is dripping from the trapdoor leading up to the roof, and the ladder beneath is wet and smeared with blood. Once the trapdoor is open the adventurers are greeted by torrential rain. This has made the roof very slippery and anyone venturing onto it must make a successful **Dex** test or slip. A successful **I** test allows a character who has slipped to catch hold of the edge of the trapdoor and not slide off the roof (which results in falling 5 yards) to the ground below.

If Grat is discovered up on the roof (by a successful *Observe* test), he will fight until slain. His suckers allow him to move about on the roof with no danger of falling off. If the adventurers leave the stables without discovering him, Grat returns to his feast until summoned by Otto (see below).

The Coach House - The door to this building is locked (CR 30). Inside there is a coach belonging to Cartak Lines of Altdorf. This coach arrived before the mutants attacked. Its passengers and crew were drugged and are now either dead or tied up in the cellar.

The Inn & Bar Room - The main door to the Hooded Man is bolted and the curtains are drawn. Sounds of merriment can be heard coming from inside, giving the impression that all is well. As soon as there is a knock at the door, however, the laughter dies away and there are sounds of movement (scraping chairs and the like). After a minute or so the bolts are drawn and the door opened by a horrendously fat character. This is Otto, one of the mutants, who is masquerading as the landlord.

Otto is surprised to see the adventurers, as he believed the inn to be secure against outsiders. Making an ill-concealed attempt to hide his surprise, Otto invites the adventurers into the bar room. A fire burns in the fireplace and sitting next to it is Hans, dressed in his (stolen) Roadwarden's uniform.

A loud thump directs all eyes to the back of the bar where a man with protuberant eyes appears and begins to mop up something on the floor. This is Fagor, who has come up from the cellar to mop up the blood from the floor. Unless the adventurers go to have a look at what he is doing, he finishes after a few minutes and then takes his bloodstained mop and bucket into the kitchen.

Otto the 'landlord' is nervous about the adventurers' presence (given what is to happen later) and this shows in his mannerisms. He constantly fingers the bottom of his apron, twisting and turning it with suppressed tension. He attempts to send the adventurers on their way as quickly as possible by claiming that the inn is full. Otto makes no effort to make the adventurers feel welcome. He has a coach party in residence, who have just retired for the night, and he "wants no 'gentlemen' of the adventurers' kind tonight, thank you".

If the adventurers insist on staying (unless they wish to die at the hands of whatever lurks in the forest), Otto eventually (and grudgingly) allows them to do so. He continues to behave ungraciously - any drinks, for example, are served in unwashed tankards.

Eventually Otto heads into the kitchen with a muttered "I suppose you want feeding as well..." He is actually leaving to organise the rest of the mutants, while Hans keeps the adventurers occupied.

Hans, in his guise as a Roadwarden, questions the adventurers in an attempt to find out who and what they are. Hans asks his questions in his 'official' capacity, using the excuse that he believes the adventurers to be bandits. If the adventurers mention the ferry, Hans claims it was attacked (and the ferryman carried off) by bandits. This, he explains is why the inn is so securely locked.

He also manages to imply that the adventurers are in league with these same (non-existent) bandits: "I think your sudden appearance has unnerved the landlord. Mind you, he could be right... Who else would be out on a night such as this?" Hans is clever enough not to press this line of argument too far, and he seems to be satisfied by any reasonable story the adventurers care to tell him.

If the adventurers mention the mutant in the stables, Hans is surprised. He believes all the mutants to be hiding in the inn. He appears surprised when told of the body: "The landlord assured me that the stable boy had run off. No one bothered checking for him up there. Well, he can wait till morning to be buried."

If the adventurers mention either the body or Grat to Otto he looks very worried and shocked. His real fear, however, is that the adventurers have uncovered the mutants' business here. He changes the subject and looks to Hans to bail him out.

Once Hans is sure that the adventurers have no official connections, he excuses himself and goes into the kitchen. Adventurers who state they are watching Hans as he leaves will notice his 'wound' and the bloodstain with a successful *Observe* test.

By now the adventurers should be suspicious and be trying to find out what is going on. A character stood at the bar can overhear Hans and Otto in the kitchen. "Don't panic, Otto. They are only travellers. Tzeentch will be pleased to have their souls as well. Use the kurts in their food and we'll deal with them later." Hans then

passes Otto the phial containing the kurts. After this Otto has the phial in his possession.

If Hans hears anyone attempting to sneak into the kitchen he comes back into the bar. He closes the door into the kitchen with an air of finality, making it very awkward for anyone to push past without a very good reason.

A short while later Otto returns bearing bowls of hot stew. Each bowl contains two doses of kurts. Characters have a base 10% chance of noticing the drug in the food. This 10% is averaged with a character's **Int** to see if they notice its taste in the food. Characters with *Cook* skill have a 10% bonus to their chance of noticing the drug.

KURTS

Kurts is a drug made from the Gortsiete plant. It begins to take effect after half an hour. One dose induces drowsiness; two doses causes unconsciousness (**WFRP** p82). Characters may overcome its effects by making successful *Toughness* tests (at +2) for each dose they consume.

•GOOD NIGHT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN•

After the adventurers have finished eating, but before the kurts takes effect, Otto offers to show the adventurers to the common room upstairs. He claims that the other rooms are occupied by the coach party.

The hallway is wet and uncarpeted, although a close inspection reveals that there used to be a carpet in here - bits of cloth still cling to the tacks in the floor. The carpet has been removed and the floor mopped by Fagor to remove bloodstains.

The common room is dirty and the bedding is soiled. If the adventurers comment on this, Otto is unsympathetic as this is "the best he can do". He then exits, looking like a man as keen to get away as soon as possible. The sound of Otto turning the key in the door lock (CR 20) is clearly audible.

From the common room the adventurers can hear the horses in the stable if Grat is still present...

The Bedrooms - There are only four bedrooms upstairs and all the doors are locked (CR 20). The landlord's room and two of the bedrooms are empty and unremarkable. However, the two beds in one room are bloodstained and the bedclothes are scattered about the room. The beds' occupants were obviously stabbed and then dragged from their beds. Trailing stains lead out through the door, but disappear at the sill.

The Kitchen - The kitchen is obviously designed for the inn's halfling cook. Fagor is in here unless the ceremony (see below) is in progress. The bucket used by him when mopping up the various bloodstains is also in here. The bucket is still full of blood-tainted water.

The door leading to the yard is unlocked.

The Cellar - The cellar contains barrels of beer and bottles of wines and spirits. There is a trail of blood stains on the floor (unless Fagor has had the wit to mop them up as well - this depends on how much help the players are going to need in working out what is going on) which leads to the loose paving slab. This has been lifted to give access to the hidden shrine built below the level of the cellar. Depending on the circumstances, the slab is either raised or lowered. When the adventurers first arrive, it is closed, but it will be opened during the ceremony. The closed slab may be discovered with a successful *Observe* test or by following the bloodstains.

The Shrine - The real landlord, his wife, two servants and one of the coachmen are still alive, although they are tightly bound in the shrine. They are still suffering from the effects of the doses of kurts they were given earlier in the evening. The bodies of the mutants' other victims are heaped in one corner: a coachman, his three artisan passengers and the inn's halfling cook.

A magical, two-foot-high statue of Tzeentch stands in the middle of the shrine in the centre of a strange moving pattern. The pattern constantly shifts between a symbol of Chaos and an octagon.

The statue is made from a greenish stone which seems to flow and move when observed. Any character observing this and the shifting floor pattern must make a **WP** test or receive D6 insanity points. The image of Tzeentch can be smashed (it has **T** 5 and **W** 5). However, unless it is destroyed in a single round the shrine's guardian demon appears to defend the statue. Once the demon is destroyed, the statue can be broken easily and the lines on the floor will fade and vanish.

Against the wall is a locked (CR 30) wooden box containing 212 GC, 365 shillings and 26 pennies. A successful search of the room reveals a loose stone behind which is hidden a pouch containing a *potion of strength* (**WFRP**, p186).

The mutant Wilhem will be in here either participating in the ceremony or lurking at the foot of the stairs.

•THE CEREMONY•

Shortly after the Otto has shown the adventurers to their room the doses of kurts begin to take effect. Half an hour after the drug should have taken effect (the mutants know when this should be) Otto collects Grat from the stables. Anyone looking out of the common room window at this time sees Otto going out to stable and returning with a mutant (if Grat is still alive).

Hans and the mutants assemble in the cellar to conduct a ceremony using the magical energy of the statue to summon a demon. Shortly afterwards the ceremony begins, and faint, discordant chanting fills the inn. This continues for half an hour, while Hans ritually sacrifices two humans as the summoning requires.

As the ceremony begins Fagor sneaks up to the adventurers' room and listens at the door. Characters not suffering from the effects of kurts who make a successful *Listen* test hear him approach the door. If Fagor becomes suspicious that the adventurers are not unconscious or, for example, the common room door is open, he returns to the cellar and warns the other mutants, who close the trapdoor and continue the ceremony. If given the opportunity, Fagor hides somewhere in the inn and attempts to attack a lone adventurer from behind.

If all appears well, he immediately returns to the cellar and joins the other mutants in the chant.

Unless the adventurers intervene in the ceremony the statue transforms into a demon. It appears as a nine-foot-tall, green, spindly human with a long neck and a hideous, oversized head. Any creature under 10' tall viewing it must test against *Cool* or become rooted to the spot with *fear* (see **WFRP** p68). Unfortunately for Hans, he is unaware of the ritual to bind the demon and it immediately attacks him and the mutants. The demon is set upon slaying all it sees and pursues any fleeing characters after first slaying anybody near it.

GUARDIAN DEMON

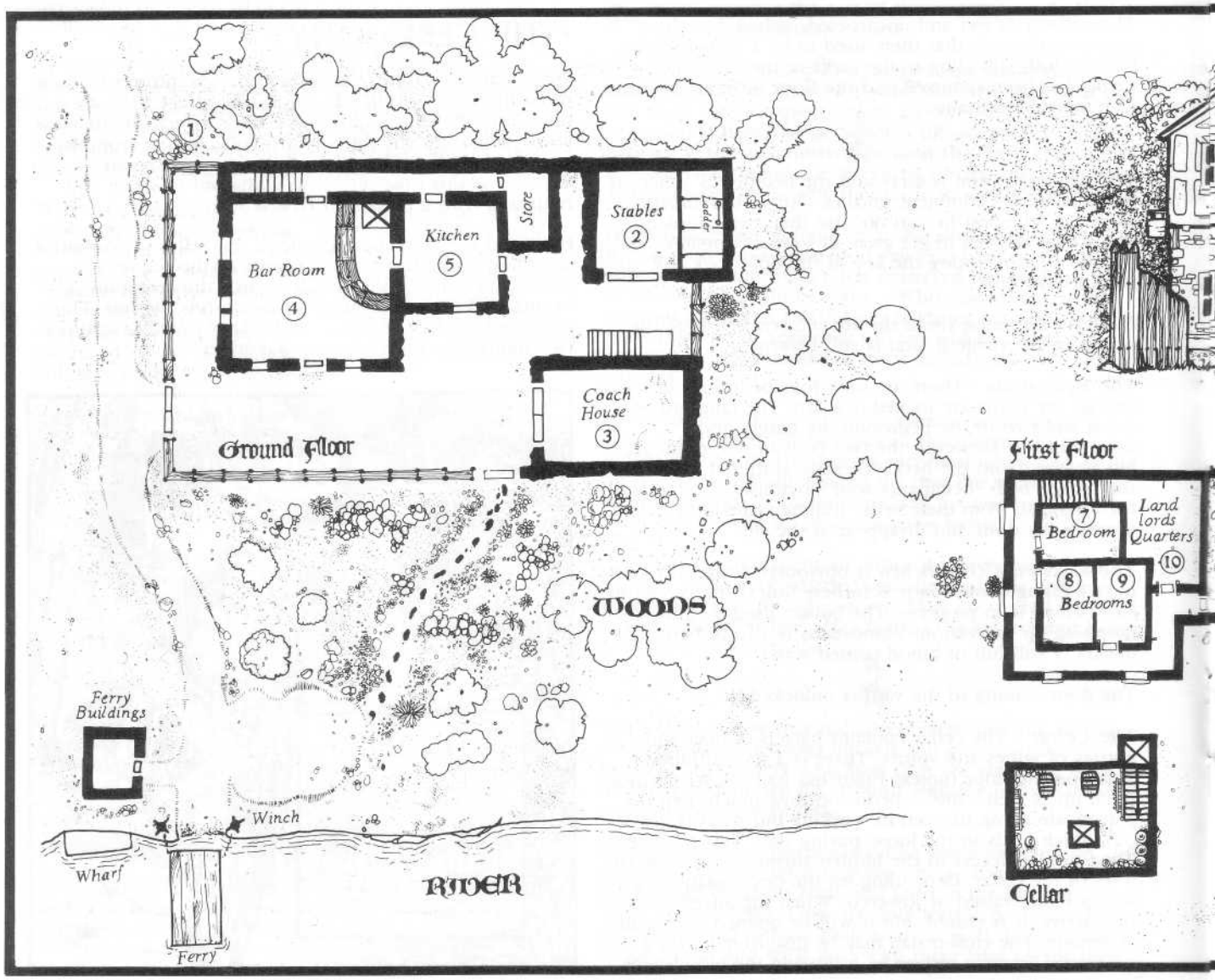
M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	50	40	3	4	6	50	2	80	80	80	80	80	10

The demon attacks by biting and raking with its claws. Once it leaves the shrine it becomes *subject to instability* (see **WFRP** p215), although it is entirely stable within the shrine. For every 100 yards that the demon moves away from the shrine, subtract 1 from the instability die roll (treat rolls of less than 1 as 1).

•THE ROADWARDENS•

As dawn breaks, a party of four Roadwardens approach the Hooded Man. Their reaction to the adventurers or anyone else depends on putting the worst possible interpretation on the scene they find. Unless, for example, the adventurers can produce mutant bodies or captives - or some other proof of what really happened - the Roadwardens choose to believe that the adventurers were mixed up in whatever has been going on. At the very least, charges of murdering the landlord and the others are likely to be preferred, along with any other charges that solve open cases in the Roadwardens' patrol area.

Even if they are convinced of the adventurers' innocence, the matter of what has occurred at the inn still has to be cleared up. The Roadwardens expect and insist that the adventurers accompany them to the nearest town so that the whole affair can be dealt with a in proper manner.



4 ROADWARDENS

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	41	35	3	3	7	30	1	29	29	29	29	29	29

Skills
Ride - Horse

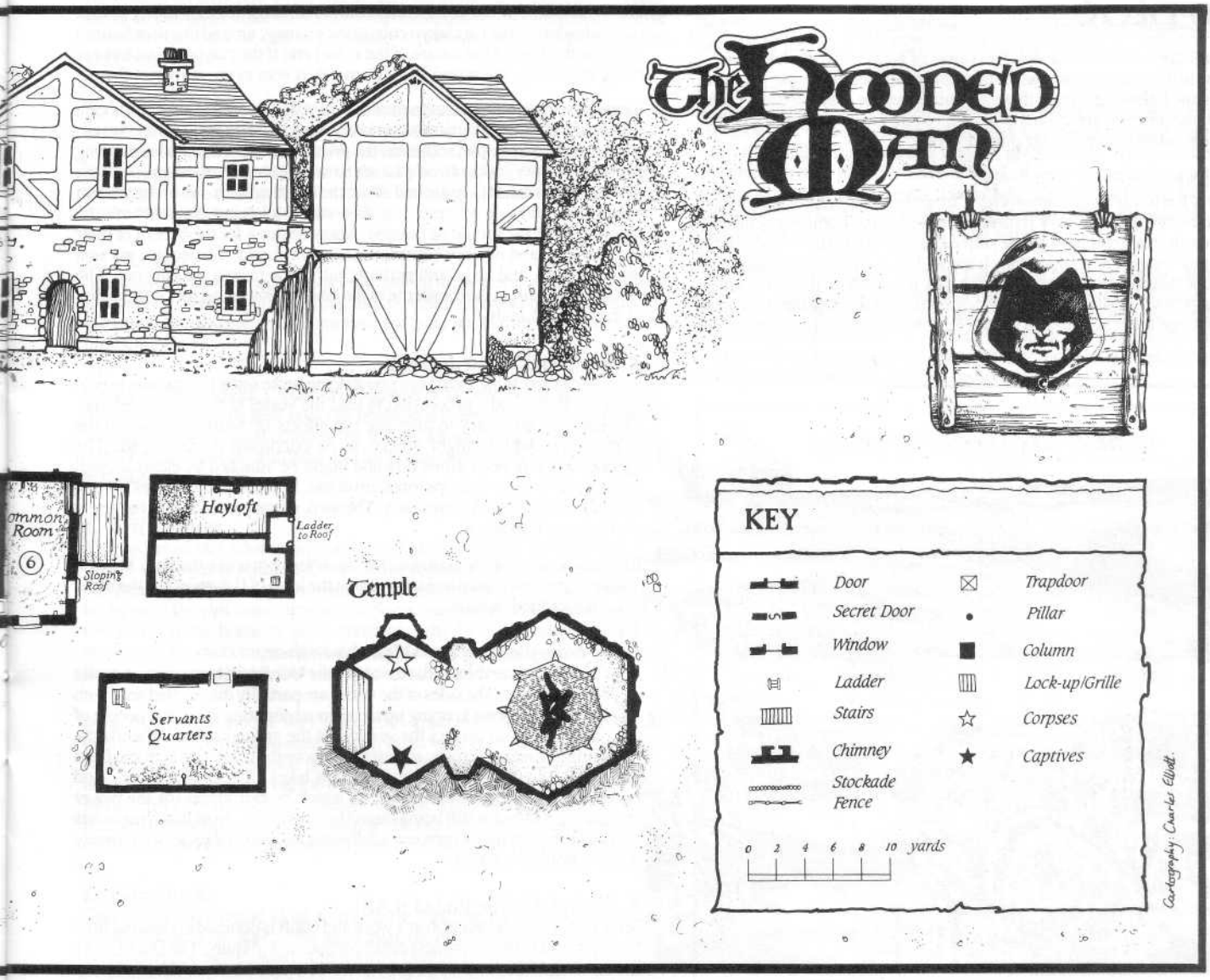
Possessions
Crossbow and ammunition
Sword
Mail Shirt (1 AP on body)
Shield (1 AP on all)
Helmet (1 AP on head)
Horse
Saddle and Harness
Rope - 10 yards

•REWARDS•

The following experience points should be awarded at the end of the adventure:

40-70 points each for good roleplaying;
30 points each for dealing with the mutants;
50 points each for destroying the statue/demon;
20 points each for dealing with the Roadwardens' suspicions.

Jim Bambra



Taurëfantô

A MERP Adventure By Graham Staplehurst

Introduction

This adventure is suitable for intermediate or higher level characters. It is set in the area covered by ICE's *Southern Mirkwood* campaign supplement, or alternatively the *Dagorlad and the Dead Marshes* adventure pack. To play this adventure straight off you will require the MERP rulebook and *Southern Mirkwood* or *Dagorlad*; otherwise you will need to spend a little while adapting it for your own campaign.

The adventure is organised into two sections. The first includes this introduction and notes, along with *The Plot*, a selection of helpful and misleading events under the heading *Rumours*, and the satistics for principal NPCs and creatures to be encountered (this is to be found at the end of the adventure). The second section comprises five essays giving background information on the different elements of the plotline. You may also find these useful in their own right as additions to the MERP supplements if you regularly play MERP. Owing to its freeform nature, you are advised to be very familiar with the plot before attempting to run this adventure.

QUOTATIONS

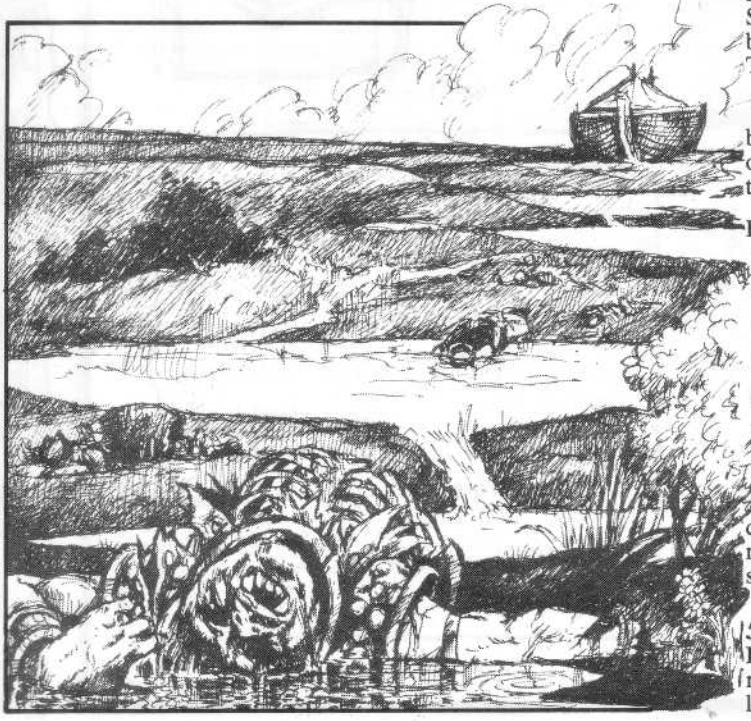
Quotations in the text are from *The Lord of the Rings* (Vol.II, Book 3, Ch.4; and Vol.III, Appendix F) and *The Silmarillion* (Quenta Silmarillion, Ch.1 and 2). The original inspiration for the scenario came from the tale of Aldarion and Erendis in *Unfinished Tales*. All these works are by J R R and C J R Tolkien.

the plot

Taurëfantô does not follow a straight course of action. Events take place, but it is up to the characters to react to them and influence the course of future events. In the following section there are guidelines for suggested activities at each stage, but you are at liberty to adapt these as you see fit to suit the style of adventure you and your players prefer.

OUTLINE

A group of Entwives (the *Nólënorolvar*), from the lost female branch of the ancient race of Onodrim, have returned to their former home in northwest Middle-earth in a great land-going ship called the *Taurëfantô*. They have with them a 'magic item' which they hope will cure their blighted gardens of the curse that Sauron laid on them, but they need to have time to transfer it into the ground. Assistance from the descendants of the wild men to whom they taught the art of agriculture should be able to give them the time they need.



Illustrated by Steven Tappin

1. The Arrival Of Taurëfantô

The great vessel may arrive 'before' the adventure proper starts. The characters get to hear of it from gossip in a village or town they are resting in, or from some NPCs they encounter during or after their last adventure. Such a wonder will surely be a talking point for many miles around. Alternatively, you may have the adventure start with the characters themselves witnessing the arrival of the vessel late one afternoon.

The *Taurëfantô* settles somewhere on the Talath Harroch in Dor Rhúnen, south of Mirkwood and east of the Emyn Muil. The exact site is left to you, but it will be in a rather desolate area at the edge of the Brown Lands. This is the limit for easy travel with the Yavannen (the spirits moving the vessel); to push them further might harm them. Settlements in the area (but not close by - the Nólënorolvar have deliberately kept out of the way of human habitation) include Gondorean outposts, Asdriag camp sites and outlying Gramuz villages and farms.

2. Initial Reactions

The Taurëfantô lays quiet for some days. Characters in the area may pick up tales concerning the vessel; these are covered in the *Rumours* section. Select these randomly or choose them to suit appropriate actions of the characters. This is a good time for the characters to investigate the vessel, seek advice elsewhere, make plans and so on. Hopefully, they will end up very confused and none the wiser, unless they have been exceedingly clever or lucky.

During this time, some of the Nólënorolvar leave the vessel secretly to seek out the leaders of the Uerdakyn cults in the vicinity; around this time Sauron learns something of the nature of the vessel and if the player characters are being noticeably interested in it, Thendrik is sent to try to recruit them.

At the end of this period a council of the Uerdakyn priests is held. Although not secret, it is strictly guarded and very hard to infiltrate. At the council, a Unada called Singalótë addresses the priests and seeks their aid in planting the Rune of Power in the Brown Lands to make them flourish again. All the priests are tremendously excited about the meeting with one of the ancient Mistresses and her scheme, but then start bickering about where the Valquetta-i-Olvar should be planted. Many desire it for the benefit of their own regions, and no easy compromise can be found. The debate goes on for a few days, and ends with perhaps half of the priests walking out. The rest agree to assist in the transferral of the Word of Power to a spot in the centre of the Brown Lands.

3. Taurëfantô's Last Journey

Singalótë instructs the Uerdakyn priests to organise some ceremonies to help bless the Rune, and a procession to lead the vessel to the designated site. The latter is necessary to alleviate the effects of Sauron's curse on the Yavannen, which might otherwise be corrupted or destroyed. The procession will need protection and might be attacked by either a small body of low-level evil troops (orcs, uruk-hai, hill trolls, Easterlings) or one of the Del-Dúrimbë. Alternatively, Thendrik might persuade the characters to attack the Uerdakyn.

Eventually, despite harassment, the *Taurëfantô* reaches the site. There it settles right down into the earth, so that the level of Belowdeck is the same as the ground outside.

4. Transplanting the Valquetta-i-Olvar

The Nólënorolvar then enlist the aid of the Uerdakyn in transplanting the Word of Power. The sides of the vessel are partially dismantled and, with the Nólënorolvar keeping up a continual chanting song, the people of the Earth Cult protect the vessel and the ground around it while the Yavannen firstly churn the soil and then move the plant matrix in situ from the vessel to the prepared ground. This takes 24 hours (or more), and presents the best opportunity for an attack by evil forces (or the player characters, if they are still being duped by Thendrik). Note that Sauron has not had sufficient time to prepare a full-scale assault on the site, so is merely sending available agents.

5. Ilúvëtel (Q: The End of it All)

In the end, all the Nólënorolvar's work and effort is doomed to yield but little result, thanks to the fathomless depths of Sauron's iniquity. The Dark Lord's last agent suddenly arrives on the scene, or reveals him/herself, producing

the Morgon-i-Ancalagon. After a brief soliloquy in typical arch-villain style, they speak the words of command and the power of the Morgon blasts the Valquetta-i-Olvar. There is nothing that the characters can do except save themselves (unless you want to be very generous and the players are extremely sharp); the Enadai will seek to save the Rune by cushioning the blast and expending their own life-force. This results in their inevitable demise, but may save a portion of the Word of Power and/or the characters. The perpetrator is either destroyed in the conflagration unless you wish them to escape to be pursued by the player characters. Whatever power remains in the Valquetta-i-Olvar is insufficient to counteract the inimical effects of the curse laid by Sauron aeons earlier. The Rune fades and is forgotten over the tale of years, and *Taurëlindelëturúvafantôrandovenëmbar* crumbles into nothingness, the secret of its construction gone.

RUMOURS

Any of these 'random events' may be used at any point in stage 2 of the plot. They can also be used to introduce Thendrik to the player characters; he might hear the story at the same time, or may even be the teller of the tale. He will always seek to put the blackest interpretation on any event, and exhibits great concern for the welfare of the adjacent societies, trying to enlist the sympathy and active support of the characters. The encounters are presented as the basis for a tale to be related to the characters by someone (this might be second-, third- or even fourth-hand, of course), with additional and more accurate information available to adventurers at the scene.

A. Singing

Faint singing is heard emanating from the unearthly vessel, gentle and rhythmical yet somehow weird and mysterious. Differing interpretations could be put on the music, since no words can be distinguished. At times, the repetitive sounds could even be said to be sinister - perhaps they form part of some unknown ritual…

If the PCs are present: Closer to, the singing resembles more the sounds of nature in the open air; it lies somewhere between birdsong, the humming of busy insects and the rustle of leaves in trees on a windy day. If anyone listening knows Quenya to rank 4 or better, they might "imagine" that the sound is of a strange choir, singing in some exotic dialect of Quenya from years past; however no sense may be made of it.

B. The Wake

Small springs have started welling in the path of the vessel and in the area where it now rests. Plants are flourishing there - some might say quite unnaturally. However, this strange wake demonstrates quite plainly that the vessel came out of the East.

If the PCs are present: Closer investigation of the plants and springs shows that the water is very pure but both poisonous plants and herbs are growing amongst the more usual plants of the region; for example: Bright Blue Eyes, Splayfoot Goodwort, Muilfana and Silmaana (see *Southern Mirkwood* p53 and *MERP* p85).

C. Evil Corpses

The bodies of half a dozen orcs and a troll are found close to the vessel. The bodies are severely mutilated, even to the extent of being 'shredded'. Their weapons are splintered and broken, their armour torn and useless. There are no signs of the evil ones' opponents. Some may interpret this as a sign that the vessel is the home of good creatures who have defended themselves successfully; others might say that the orcs came from the vessel and, having been severely punished, their bodies were thrown from it.

If the PCs are present: A Very Hard (-30) Tracking Roll will reveal that the orcs came from the south, went right up to the vessel, and then were returning south before being set upon and killed. Five successful Tracking Rolls are necessary to trail the orcs back to the secret entrance to Dol Guldur in the Emyn Muil. There are no signs of opponents, even with Absolute Success on the roll. All the corpses are perhaps slightly dirtier than usual (even for orcs and trolls). This is because they were killed in a 'churning' (see *Nólënorolvar*).

D. Odd Couple

Two corpses are found close to the nearest human habitation, apparently dumped there. One is a middle-aged man, the other a younger woman. Both are moderately well dressed, although the clothes are ruined. Both died from crushing blows or perhaps a bad fall. Neither is known to anyone hereabouts.

If the PCs are present: The characters cannot identify them either. Careful examination of their possessions may suggest that they were thieves.

GM: These are indeed a pair of Gondorean thieves who investigated the vessel too closely and were slain after attacking the Enadai.

E. Flying Tonight

A giant creature is seen in the vicinity of the vessel, flying across the face of the moon. It is vaguely bat-like, being black with membranous flapping wings. Any of the following attributes may be given to it by the tale-teller: it was mounted by a rider clad in swathes of black; it was a fearsome beast but without a rider; it had glowing red eyes; it had a halo of guttering flame; it bore a man clad in white wielding a sword of gold; it was really a black eagle with the sign of the Eye on the underside of its wings.

If the PCs are present: Successful Perception Rolls may give additional information as appropriate for either Faroth Morchaint or Vllagaur; note that if you repeat this encounter (perhaps once as a story and another time as a witnessed event), you should confuse the characters by using the other Del-Dúrimbë the second time. Any Perception Roll will be at a significant penalty due to the darkness and distance involved.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN MERP

Ag		Agility	**bs**	broadsword	
Ap		Appearance	**cl**	club	
AT		Armour Type	**cp**	composite bow	
	NO	no armour	**da**	dagger	
	SL	soft leather	**kn**	knife	
	RL	rigid leather	**qs**	quarterstaff	
	CH	chainmail	**sc**	scimitar	
	PL	platemail	**sp**	spear	
	+S	shield			
Co		Constitution	**M**	Medium	
DB		Defensive Bonus	**L**	Large	
Ig		Intelligence	**H**	Huge	
It		Intuition	**Bi**	bite	
OB		Offensive Bonus	**Cl**	claw	
PP		Power Points	**Cr**	crush	
Pr		Presence	**Gr**	grapple	
Q:		Quenya			
Rh:		Rhovanion Tongue	**Spd**	Speed	
RR		Resistance Roll	**MD**	medium	(65')
S:		Sindarin	**MF**	moderately fast	(80')
St		Strength	**FA**	fast	(110')
(No)/(No)		level/rank	**VF**	very fast	(140')

F. Crazed Priest

One of the Uerdakyn priests performs a blood sacrifice near the vessel, to honour the Earth Mothers' return. Some telling this story will go on to say how the sky turned black and thunder rolled in from the hills as if they were in agony; others might also maliciously add that the priest was aided by an invisible creature from the vessel (though how this was divined is not revealed).

If the PCs are present: The priest is gripped in a violent passion, and sacrifices a pair of goats on a makeshift altar. He is obviously mad if approached. After his ritual, he faints but there is little effect; that night, however, there is a terrific thunderstorm. Magical divination or weather-reading skills will determine that the storm is natural. It will not be possible for the characters to reach the priest before he completes the ritual. The priest is scruffily dressed and one of the itinerant Uerdakyn priests occasionally met.

G. Shadows at Night

One night, the side of the vessel opens and 'something' comes out. A number of shadowy forms are seen; these are of indeterminate height, size and even shape. Some will maintain that they are wights or wraiths or some other malefic undead creature come to poison the land and slay their children; others think they must be ancient spirits from Aman lost on a voyage through the Three Worlds.

If the PCs are present: Even the best Perception Roll yields no more information. The forms glide over the earth and, since the night is so dark, they soon disappear from view. They do leave tracks which can be seen in the morning, but half a mile from the vessel they diverge and can no longer be followed. The tracks are unlike anything anyone in the party has seen before.

taurëlíndelëturúvafan tôrandovenëmbar

Taurëlindelëturúvafantôrandovenëmbar, an Entish Quenya word which loosely means wood-singing-great-wooden-whale-wandering-wood-home, is a huge wooden vessel built by the Nólënorolvar to transport their own version of the Valquetta-i-Olvar to the Brown Lands and heal them of the curse with which Sauron afflicted them. It is known as the *Taurëfantô* for brevity's sake.

The vessel vaguely resembles a vast ship like the Ark. It has no masts as such, although two posts support a massive canopy of some sort which entirely drapes the top of the vessel. When first sighted, it will probably appear much closer than it really is, since it is built on such a huge scale. From prow to stern it is at least 300 yards long, and its bulk towers more than 200 feet into the air. Close to it has a wrecked appearance, covered in living plants which may be seaweed or vines, encrusted with algae, mosses and lichens. The hull is dark grey and brown, built of an unidentifiable wood, or possibly stone, while the canopy is sallow, tinged with green and brown stains.

When the vessel moves it seems to glide through the earth, propelled by nothing more than the urge of the soil. The great furrow it drags closes over behind it, leaving only a wake of rapidly growing wild plants which flower the next day, creating a narrow swathe of blue and red across the green grasslands of the Plain of Rhovanion.

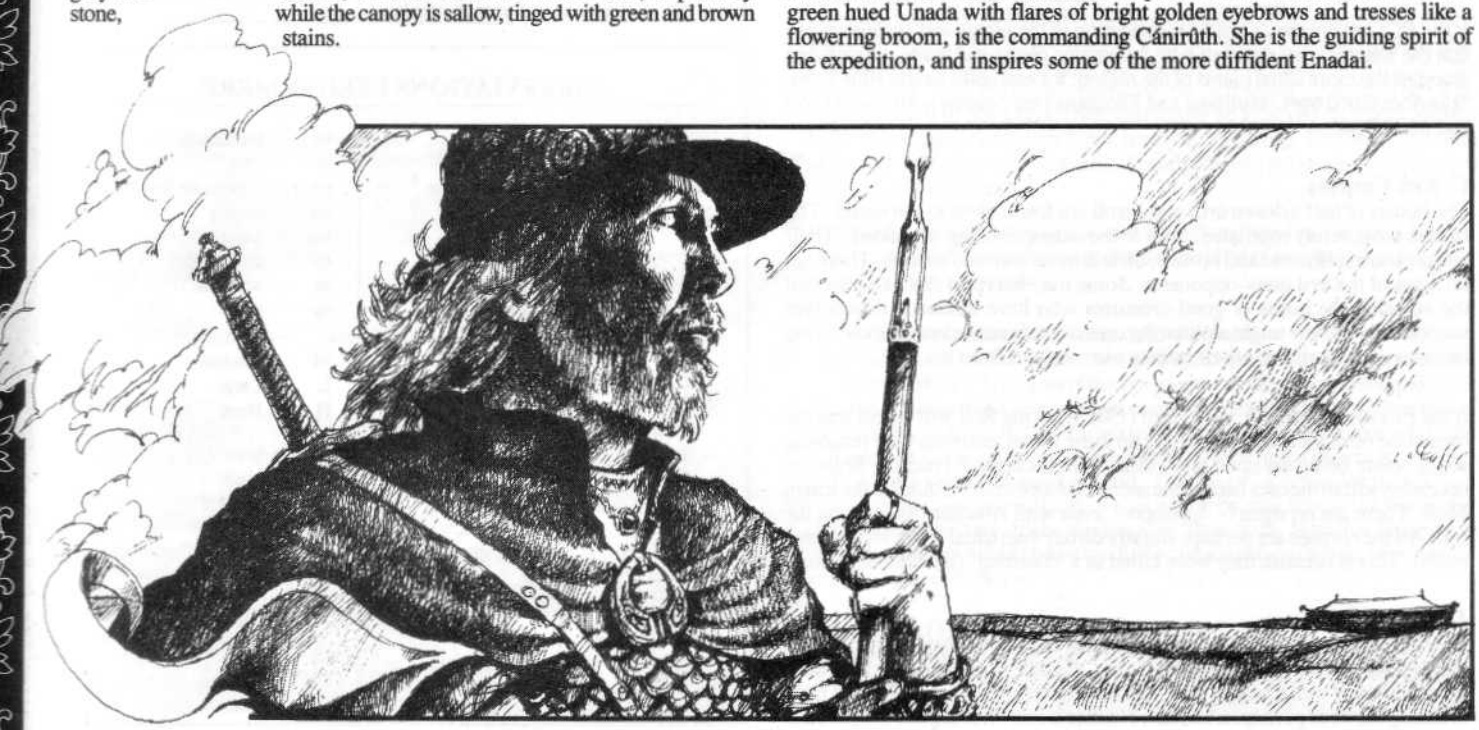
The ship has been built by the Enadai known as the Nólënorolvar. Its construction and method of propulsion are beyond the divination of mortals, and even the Elves. Within the vessel is a marvel to match any currently in northwest Middle-earth: the Valquetta-i-Olvar. Myriad beams of light spill down from concealed portals in the sides of the hull onto a rich bed of soil spread across the Belowdeck. Here thrives a complex community which, through its inner bonding and correspondence with the Word of Power invoked by Yavanna, channels the power of the Song of Creation itself. There are tall shrubs and spreading bushes, grasses and creepers, lofty, slender reeds and palms, vibrant undergrowth and layer upon layer of leafy vegetation. Birds fly and sing amongst the plant life, small mammals push through the fallen leaves and chew on roots, insects dart from flower to flower, worms and termites turn the soil, even microbes flourish in the humus.

As well as light, the matrix of plants needs water, and this is supplied by the canopy over the Upperdeck. An integral part of the Word of Power is a prolific species of silkworm (S: *mânsirrima*), and the Enadai collect the silk from these silkworms to maintain the canopy. Every dawn dew forms on the underside of the canopy and rivulets trickle and run down to vats and pools on the Belowdeck. In this way only purified and benign waters feed the Valquetta-i-Olvar.

If the Belowdeck is an apparently chaotic jungle of plants and wildlife, dappled with golden beams and misty vapours, the Upperdeck is a more orderly place. The Nólënorolvar have their living space here, amid grassy and mossy lawns edged with delicate flowering plants. Only a shallow layer of soil covers this deck, but it has been 'landscaped' with boulders and shrubs. An even light permeates the canopy, which is occasionally rolled right back. Round holes lead down to the Belowdeck, living ladders of woven ivy stretching over one hundred feet into the greenery.

A community of some twenty-eight Nólënorolvar, of widely differing types, dwell on the vessel. All have some knowledge of the Valquetta-i-Olvar and can use its Power on the vessel or in the vicinity. When they venture further abroad, however, they will be without the protection of the Yavannen while in the Brown Lands, until the Valquetta-i-Olvar has been transplanted and given time to work against Sauron's mortal curse.

The Nólënorolvar are careful to hide their presence on board from any prying eyes. They are especially watchful for Sauron's agents; they know they cannot hope to escape his attention but realise that caution and discretion will make the success of their mission much more probable. Their leader, a stern, dark green hued Unada with flares of bright golden eyebrows and tresses like a flowering broom, is the commanding Cánirûth. She is the guiding spirit of the expedition, and inspires some of the more diffident Enadai.



Despite their precautions, careful observers will be able to see shadowy shapes moving behind the canopy with a successful Perception Roll. However, even someone capable of flying close to the vessel's Upperdeck will see no more than this. Anyone coming close to the vessel will be discouraged; the Nólënorolvar will summon the Yavannen by singing and seek to disturb those present. First they simply cause the ground to shake and shudder, then seek to drive the intruders back. If this fails, two or three Enadai silently come through secret portals in the side of the vessel and cause the Churning of the Soil.

If you wish to have alternative explanations for the provenance of the vessel, local sources may offer any of the following:

1. The vessel is a Ship of the Dead. Part of Ar-Pharazôn's 'Golden Fleet' sent to invade Westernnesse at the end of the Second Age, the ship was doomed rather than sunk in the cataclysm that swallowed Númenor. Since that dreadful day, the ship has sailed the seas and lands of the world, manned by an uncaring and undead crew, cursed to wander eternally that men should never forget the folly of the King.

2. The vessel is a ship of elven design, manufactured from magical wood that can fly or float or traverse the land. It has come from beyond Rhúnen, passing undetected through uninhabited wastes on a secret mission to challenge the Necromancer in Dol Guldur. The ship has weapons of great strength to blast the tower to rubble and destroy the evil lurking therein.

3. The vessel is a Corsair reaver gripped by a cyclone and whirled through the atmosphere high above the face of Arda until it came crashing down here, dismasted and beached miles from the sea. It has been possessed by orcs or some other race of evil creatures who are planning to launch an attack from it at the behest of their foul Master.

4. The vessel is the creation of the Wainriders, home to thousands of a new tribe of sorcerers from the far East, out to dominate the region and claim it for their own. These barbaric worshippers of the Dark Lord have perverted the trees and rocks and all other aspects of Nature, bending them to their will and purpose to create this Ark to carry them so many leagues. Soon a hellish horde will burst forth in a black tide and sweep all before them.

Nólënorolvar

The *Nólënorolvar* are a select branch of the *Enadai*, known to Common Men as the Entwives. It is with them that this story has grown; it is their ideas that have been nurtured and blossomed, and the *Taurëlindelëturúvafantôrandovenëmbar* is the fruit of their labours. We will start by recounting their history, such as it is known to us.

Professor Tolkien described the Ents as being "the most ancient people surviving in the Third Age". In his translation of the Red Book of Westmarch, he relates a conversation shared by the Hobbits Meriadoc and Peregrine with Fangorn the Ent which gave us, until recently, all the extant information regarding the Entwives.

"The Ents gave their love to things that they met in the world... loved the great trees, and the wild woods, and the slopes of the high hills; and they drank of the mountain streams, and ate only such fruit as the trees let fall in their path... But the Entwives gave their minds to the lesser trees, and to the meads in the sunshine beyond the feet of the forests; and they saw the sloe in the thicket, and the wild apple and the cherry blossoming in spring, and the green herbs in the waterland in summer, and the seedling grasses in the autumn fields... The Entwives ordered them to grow according to their wishes, and bear leaf and fruit to their liking... So the Entwives made gardens to live in...

"When the Darkness came the Entwives crossed the Great River, and made new gardens, and tilled new fields. After the Darkness was overthrown the land of the Entwives blossomed richly, and their fields were full of corn. Many men learned the crafts of the Entwives and honoured them greatly; but we were only a legend to them, a secret in the heart of the forest.

"Long ago... we crossed the Anduin and came to their land; but we found a desert: it was all burned and uprooted, for war had passed over it. But the Entwives were not there. Long we called, and long we searched... "

The Ents never discovered whence the Entwives had departed after the desecration of the Brown Lands by Sauron, and there are none surviving in Middle-earth save the oldest Ents who can still remember what the Entwives looked like. Fangorn described a *Unada* thus:

"Fimbrethil - very fair she was in my eyes, though little like the Entmaiden of old... Hair parched by the sun to the hue of ripe corn and cheeks like red apples. "

An ancient vellum written in old Quenya by the Noldor poet Kistorë describes an encounter with a small group of Enadai during his travels to the East:

"One stood swaying like a stand of harvested wheat, with a flared golden head and a slender body which bent gracefully with the rustling wind; another was green and sturdy and somehow leafy, like a water plantain, her pink-centred boughs and variegated veins like a delicate tracery of lace, and surrounding her was a hazy cloud of scent; the third and fourth were quite similar - tall and erect, a deep green with magnificent plumes of creamy white on their crests. These sisters resembled the great grasses of the savannah and the pampas...

"Their motion was swift and fluid, like the wind rippling across a field in May. And yet something seemed to move with them below the ground; there was a tremor, like standing upon the skin of a taut drum, and a thrill passed one by. Did the earth crest and move them, as the waves of the wide ocean move banks of seaweed? I do not know. Only - I fancied that perhaps they are like unto the islands of ice I have seen in Northern Seas and Helcaraxë, whose bulk lies hidden from sight beneath the water. "

He later states:

"The Enadai have grown much less like the Onodrim we know in Middle-earth. They have become closer to the plants they love; the plants of the water margins and the hedgerows, and most of all the cultivated plants of the field and the orchard. Too, they have grown closer to the soil and the creatures that move and dwell in it.

"Just as the Onodrim are Shepherds and Masters of the Trees, so their departed and estranged spouses may be thought Farmers and Mistresses of the Soil. The Onodrim on occasion can speak to the Huorns, the spirits of the trees, wakening them and causing the wood to move. The Enadai sing to the Yavannen, the quiescent spirits of the earth. When the Yavannen hear the song of the Enadai, they rise up and obey their bidding. The Yavannen can inhabit the earth and the soil, or the myriad plants that grow close to it, or even the creatures and animals that live in the soil. Some Yavannen have an affinity for water and slip through streams and pools, unseen and felt only as a passing eddy or current. It is with the aid of the Yavannen that the Enadai work their magic green touch upon the land. "

The rest of the story we must piece together for ourselves. We know Sauron wove terrible necromancies of drought and dessication and poisoned the lands used by the Enadai south of the Greenwood. No mere incursion of warring bands could have made the land so desolate that the Entwives could not restore it. Being unable to heal their gardens, they chose exile in the East, where an untamed continent stretched before them unlike the troubled northwest of Endor.

Before they departed, however, their interaction with the men of the region was deep enough to become a permanent legacy. Today there are still priests of the *Uerdakyn* in Rhovanion, men and women who worship in the Cult of the Earth and Growing Things. In the mind of man, the memory of the benign Mistresses who taught them the skills of tilling, sowing and reaping has been much altered, so that the Enadai are remembered as goddesses with vast and wondrous powers, who still live hidden amongst the plants and rocks, in the soil and the waters; spirits who bring down the rain and clear the skies that the sun might shine.

Most of the *Enadai's* powers come from their association with the *Yavannen*. The latter were spirit creatures who existed partially in this world and also in another, in the same manner as the *ulairi* or undead. They were forced to depart the Brown Lands because Sauron's magic caused any Yavannen tarrying there to expire. Now the Nólënorolvar feel that they can return and counteract the Dark Lord's essence with the *Valquetta-i-Olvar*.

Like Ents, the Entwives vary greatly in appearance and many other aspects. Statistics for these creatures are therefore given in general terms only.

A Unada is typically 15th to 25th level, with around 100 hits. Their smaller size and less robust stature makes them more vulnerable to attacks and they similarly fear fire. Their defence is roughly equivalent to Chain, with a DB of 40 to 60. They can employ (but will only do so in dire circumstances) either a Grapple or Crush attack, with an OB of 90+. They are either large or huge creatures, many being able to physically draw themselves up to a greater height (and reach) than at first perceived.

A Unada can use her song to call on the Yavannen when in trouble. A gentle humming will set the ground moving for 30 feet around her, or for 10 feet around a point up to 100 yards distant. These movements will be felt as an Unbalancing attack with an OB of up to 50. Alternatively, the Yavannen can 'infest' plants making them move and grab opponents in the same area. Small creatures will be held fast, larger ones having their movement reduced by 25%, 50% or 75%. Huge creatures will be unaffected. These songs need at least 1 minute to take effect, and the longer they go on for, the greater the possible effect. Other forms of attack are possible, such as Tripping or Snaring.

However, the most fearsome power of the Yavannen under the power of the Enadai is that of *Churning the Soil*. All animal and plant life is sucked down below the soil by the spirits and buried there while being ground and shredded by stones, tiny animals and unyielding roots. All motionless creatures sink 12" each round while in the affected area (up to the maximum depth of the soil). If a creature can move, it sinks 1" less for each 10' of movement it has. Being attacked in this way is terrifying, and anyone witnessing it will also be afflicted with Fear. Death shortly follows burial, and even if rescued those who have been submerged may have earth blocking their nostrils and mouth. Anyone surviving burial must make a 10th level RR, with a penalty equal to the amount of damage they took; those failing are afflicted with a mortal fear of bare earth, roots and so on. This phobia will stay with them for 3d6x10 years unless cured (needs *Mental Cures* spell).

The Enadai have a +25 to saves against spells of Channelling and have 1-2 x level Power Points from that realm to use in plant-affecting, weather-affecting and protection spells. A Unada is Extremely Hard (-50) to spot if there are any reasonable size plants in the area. They leave little or no trail and move Very Fast.

Individual Yavannen may be anything from 1st through to 10th level, and are only affected by magic. They will have 55-100 hits, with no 'armour'. They are invisible and mostly undetectable; if attacked with a magic weapon they will have an effective DB of 60-75.

Notable Enadai:

There are two notable Enadai on the vessel with whom the characters may come into contact during the course of the adventure. These are *Cánirûth*, the leader of the Nólënorolvar, and *Singalótë*, a Unada who addresses the council of Uerdakyn priests.

Cánirûth (Q: *Commanding Anger*) is a stern and determined Entwife who nevertheless cares deeply about the fate of the Free Peoples in northwest Endor. She sees the mission as benefiting not only the Enadai but also all the inhabitants of the region. But most importantly for her is the possibility of rejoining the Onodrim, and seeking out her long lost love. Although very good at organising her fellow Enadai, Cánirûth is not very adept at speaking with men or similar races. She does have a beautiful singing voice, and generally leads the chants to call the Yavannen. Cánirûth appears as dark green and somewhat prickly at first, but when she sings she reveals a lighter and softer side.

Singalótë (Q: *Many Flowers*) is somewhat younger than her leader, and had greater dealings with men in the time before the Enadai left the Brown Lands. She is much happier than any of the other Nólënorolvar at speaking to men, and therefore she has volunteered to risk visiting the priest's council. Singalótë looks rather leafy and bushy, and speaks in a rather jolly tone. In colouring she is veined with pink striations giving her a delicate appearance; however she is still exceedingly strong and very tough. Her appealing voice gives her a +25 bonus for *Influencing* men.

valquetta-i-ovar

In the Beginning of Days, Yavanna Kementári of the Aratar was charged with the ordering of things that grow upon the face of Arda. She it was that caused plants and trees to sprout and flourish and blossom when first the Two Lamps were lit and shone upon the soil. And when the dark came, so we are told, "Yavanna... was unwilling to forsake the Lands; for all things that grow are dear to her.... Therefore... she would come at times and heal the hurts of Melkor."

Later, when Yavanna learnt of Ilúvatar's plan that the *olvar*, the whole realm of plants, should be open to any abuse from his Children, she grieved for them and went to Manwë. "King of Arda,' she said, 'all my works are dear to me. Shall nothing that I have devised be free from the dominion of others?' Manwë answered her, saying, 'When the Children awake, then the thought of Yavanna will awake also, and it will summon spirits from afar, and they will go among the *kelvar* and the *olvar*, and some will dwell therein, and their just anger shall be feared.'"

Yavanna's protection of the plant world led her to establish a number of sanctuaries where there would reside great powers for healing harm inflicted by evil upon her creations. She took tremendous pains to devise a way of concealing both the power and its source, so that it could be neither discovered nor afflicted by Melkor or any other who should take his side in the eternal struggle. Her solution was the creation of a living Word of Power; an herbaceous manifestation of one of the phrases of the Song *Ainulindalë*.

Deep in the heart of the vast continent of Endor, also known as Middle-earth, Yavanna Kementári, spouse of Aulë, once rested following strife with Morgoth. In their battles, the Aratar had discovered just how monstrously Morgoth had been able to pervert their creations, turning them into hideous mutations. To prevent more interference with her beloved plants here, Yavanna made a garden, setting the Word of Power once more into the ground as a matrix of living and growing things, both of *kelvar* and *olvar*.

This matrix was virtually indestructible and even capable of reproducing itself in smaller and modified versions. It preserved the spirit of Yavanna's purpose and her energy in order to ensure Morgoth and his minions could not taint the beauty she had envisaged and helped to fashion. This was one of the safeguards Eru-Ilúvatar had allowed her along with the *Onodrim*. When the Enadai migrated eastwards they encountered the Valquetta-i-Olvar, this garden of wonderful beauty and power.

Naturally enough, the rune of plants held great fascination for some of the Enadai and they stayed to help tend and study the garden. These dedicated creatures grew even wiser in the ways of Yavanna and became known as the Nólënorolvar. Although with time their numbers dwindled, in much the same way as those of the Enyd they left behind, they each grew in stature. All remembered the terrible desolation and harsh taint of the soil that had driven them out of their homeland, and they yearned to return. Some eventually came to understand something of the nature of the Word that grew about them, and perceived that they might be able to use its power to combat Sauron's lingering malignancy that blighted the plains of Southern Rhovanion.

The Valquetta-i-Olvar has thus been duplicated on the Taurëlindelëturúvafantôrandovenëmbar and transported to the site of the Enadai's ancient dwelling places in the Brown Lands.

Del-Dúrimbë

(Q: Dread Host of Night.) There are several overt and covert opponents sent by Sauron (the Necromancer) to investigate the vessel and then to thwart the Nólënorolvar's aim. Use them at the appropriate times, ignoring any that are unsuitable (too weak or too powerful) for the adventuring party.

Babbad & Grattar

These two are a pair of Olog-hai from Dol Guldur, vicious black trolls armed with spiked clubs. They have been sent to try to capture one of the inhabitants of the vessel, something which they should surely be large enough and dangerous enough to do, unless the denizens are powerful indeed. Babbad is the brighter of the two, while Grattar is keen-sighted for a troll and somewhat larger. They will seek to kill anyone associating themselves with the vessel if they cannot capture them easily. Each carries a quantity of rope and twine, and a net set with little metal hooks. They also have a flask each of the orcish revivative cordial, several large sacks, a small quantity of treasure (gold jewellery, carved bone and ivory, chunks of semi-precious crystal etc) carried in belt pouches, and a selection of iron knives, wickedly barbed and honed to a fine edge.

Faroth Morchaint (S: Shadow Huntress)

Faroth is a half-elven scout with a peculiar upbringing and background. Her mother was a Sindarin enchantress seduced by one of the evil Mannish kings Sauron had chosen to become his servants of the Ring. The product of this unholy alliance was brought up by an amoral mother and a father dwindling into undead servitude as a Ring-wraith. She now serves the Dark Lord as well, as a spy and agent, and as an assassin.

Faroth has many peculiar skills and abilities, including a well-developed empathy with her 'pet' Great Bat, *Daeramë* (S: Dark Wings). She is talented in the magical realm of Essence, and has been entrusted with an Eye Amulet to boost her powers. This amulet is of a strange alloy metal and precious stone like tiger's eye which glows luminously when its power is drawn on; to be used it has to be placed to the forehead. Its use also allows the Dark Lord access to her thoughts and perceptions. She also (naturally) knows the use of poison and carries Asgurath, Blade Hemlock and Jegga. Other offensive abilities include her Morgul-knife, the dread blade which can send a victim into the shadow world of wraiths, and a magical gold ring shaped like the body and head of a black dragon which can shoot a Darkbolt three times a day. Typically, Faroth likes to fly silently and swoop upon a victim, using poisoned blowdarts from a distance (or sometimes a composite bow), and either a scimitar or the Morgul-knife close to. Daeramë can attack with her when commanded.

Vīlagaur (S: Sky-werewolf)

This servant of Sauron is a kindred spirit of Faroth Morchaint, and yet a far more deadly original. For Vīlagaur is a true vampiress, a fearsome creature with legendary magical abilities, a being shrouded in her own race's secrecy and night-time life. Little is known of vampires, and all of it bad. Whence they came, only Morgoth and his chief servants might guess.

Vīlagaur has innate magical skills owing to her supernatural origin. These include talons capable of tearing through even metal armour, great speed and agility, power over darkness and in dark places, and resistance to normal weapons. Most importantly, she can assume a giant bat-like form and fly through the night with total silence and deadliness. Additionally, she owns a magic cloak which lends more magic powers including concealment, protection and movement.

Faroth Morchaint and Vīlagaur do not operate together; the purpose of having two similar opponents in this adventure is to confuse the players. Should they learn the identity of one, have them encounter the other next time to throw them off and ruin any plans they might have prepared. Both have similar aims, of course. One or other appears whenever there's an opportunity for sabotaging the Entwives' plans, or any activities that the player characters are undertaking on their behalf. Both take extreme pains never to be caught or slain, though they don't mind risking a little harm. They are also sensible in their use of magic and won't overstretch themselves. Both these foes are dangerous and should be used with careful restraint against lower level parties.

Thendrik

Thendrik is another agent of the Dark, but does not serve Sauron directly. He is employed by one of the cults of dark priests who worship the images of Morgoth and Sauron as the black Lords of Night. He is a Ranger of the plains, a Gramuz Northman from central Rhovanion. He appears fair and pleasant of character, only revealing his darker side in unintentional slips - and these very infrequently. He is known to many of the villages in the area as a tough man, sometimes distant and cool, but respectable. Strangely enough, if anyone is pressed, no-one can ascribe to him any noble or even useful deed, but neither are there any evil tales of him.

He dresses in traditional dull brown and green linen clothes and wears a steel and brass scale mail shirt. He has hair of a sandy colour and the healthy look of the outdoors; his eyes are blue and he sports a trimmed beard and moustache. He wears a well-worn broadsword and carries a bundle of four light spears, suitable for throwing or using in the hand. He also has an unusual ivory knife in a stained bone sheath, and around his neck is a silver chain pendant set with a small ruby. All these three items are magical; the sheath can cast Tracking twice per day and the ruby is a x2 PP multiplier. Thendrik himself knows some magic spells.

Thendrik will seek the aid of the characters, professing to be concerned about the suborning of some of the local religions by the forces of evil. The arrival of the Dark Ship (as he insists on calling it) is a sign that some great evil is soon to be released, a spell or ritual that might permanently blight all the lands and forests east of the Anduin. He will attempt to persuade the characters to launch an attack on the Dark Ship, or, failing that, to attack the Nólënorolvar when they start the transplanting of the Valquetta-i-Olvar.

Morgon-i-Ancalagon (S: The Black Stone of Ancalagon)

The Black Stone is a very potent magical item dating back to the days of the First Age when Morgoth fought the Elves in Beleriand. The Stone is a magically-bound breath of fire from the arch-Dragon Ancalagon the Black, the mightiest Dragon ever to roam Middle-earth. It resembles a rough chunk of coal or volcanic rock, pitted and scarred. By chanting a certain verse, the power locked within the Stone bursts forth, unleashing a torrent of all-consuming fire which spews for 150 yards in every direction. Anything other than a servant of the Secret Fire or a wielder of the flame of Anor will be reduced to ashes instantaneously on contact with the blast: alternatively you could treat it as a +300 Fire Ball attack, with repeated heat criticals every round until the area is left.

One of the Del-Dúrimbë possesses the Morgon - the one surviving at the end of the adventure, so that it can be released and destroy the Valquetta-i-Olvar, even if this means death or destruction for the carrier. Only if all the opponents have been removed will the Word of Power be set in place. This is necessary for the historical continuity of the works of Tolkien, since the Brown Lands do not regenerate before the Fourth Age (if then).

Other Encounters

You may wish to instigate other encounters which will cause problems for the characters; for wild beasts see Table 8.42 in *Southern Mirkwood*; for human encounters use Brigands and Bandits, Gondorean patrols and so on from the same source. Remember that the arrival of the *Taurëfantô* is a rather frightening occurrence, and many animals and people will have fled the area in mortal fear. This means that a low level party has a good chance of getting involved without having to worry about dangerous Wilderland encounters.

uerdakyn

The *Uerdakyn* is the Cult of the Earth, a Northman religion established by the elders of certain Northman tribes after the departure of the Enadai from their homelands, to explain the origins of agricultural techniques. The Cult is loosely organised, tolerating individual priests to establish themselves rather than having a formal hierarchy. Precedence is only established by the venerability of the priest (or priestess) and their popular acclaim. Since both men and women work the fields, orchards and pastures, both take holy orders.

The religion is based on a series of festivals through the year. At the end of winter there is the *Turning of the Soil*, then in Spring come the *Festival of Sowing* and the *Celebration of Blossom*. In high Summer the *Festival of Warm Winds* ushers in the change in the weather on the plains which ripens the crops and can sometimes bring drought. At the close of Summer is the greatest of all celebrations, *Harvest Home*, when great matters are settled, men and women are betrothed, and so on. Towards the end of Autumn is *Winter Warding* and in midwinter is *Yuletide*. The Winter Warding is a festival of bonfires and processions through the fields with flaming torches to keep the cold, dark spirits at bay.

Communities where the Uerdakyn is observed rely on the ritual blessings of crops and festivals through the year to support them. They believe in a general deity of Nature, an aspect of Yavanna Kementári. More particularly, they believe that she is served by an unspecified number of Earth Mothers (their concept of the Enadai) who will look after - in a spiritual sense - the fields, hedgerows, homes and pasturelands of the worshippers. These spirits are revered with prayer (ritual chants at daybreak and eventide, ie, before and after the day's work) and offerings of produce and other gifts.

Although the spirits are not actually present, of course, priests and priestesses are able to channel Power from the Valar. The concentration of Power in certain places over the years has instilled them with a Power of their own, resulting in holy springs, wells, stones, groves and even individual trees. Most priests are settled and attached to one such site; others are itinerant and act as wandering preachers. Some specialise in activities such as healing (rare), helping crops and livestock, and there are a few soothsayers, sages, hermits and so on.

Uerdakyn animists have access to spell lists specific to their practice, namely in the area of nature and agriculture. You may wish to invent new lists for them in addition to those listed below from the MERP rulebook:

Animal Mastery	Direct Channelling
Nature's Lore	Plant Mastery
Protections	Purifications
Spell Defence	Surface Ways

The priests and priestesses are recognisable by their yellow and green garb, typically long cloaks and undergarments, trimmed with flowers and leaves appropriate to the time of year, or (for the more established priests) jewelled imitations. They usually go bareheaded, winding plants into their hair and even braiding and plaiting flowering creepers like ground elder or goldbine amongst their tresses. They wield quarterstaves and spears, and some use shortbows. They do not hunt, mainly surviving on donations of food, firewood and skins from the Cult members. Their strength is greatest when close to their chosen place of Power; the exact nature of any special abilities associated with such places is up to you to decide.

Two Uerdakyn Priests

Caldheir is a pleasant man from a small Gramuz village associated with the holy spring named *Aerdicsbern* (Rh: Spring of Light Water). The water from the spring is high in mineral content and slightly effervescent. Caldheir serves his community dutifully and is both respected and liked. He is now 52 and will go to attend the council of Uerdakyn addressed by the Unada. Initially, he will be in favour of the Valquetta-i-Olvar being planted in current Gramuz territory, but will eventually join the group favouring the resurrection of the Brown Lands.

Caldheir owns a magic staff and has special powers connected with Aerdicsbern. In the vicinity of the spring, he has x2 PP and an additional 48PP which can be used to cast spells from the *Spring Waters* spell list:

1. Water Production I
2. Water Production V
3. Area Protection II
4. Waterwall
5. Water Bolt (100').

He can also cast these spells away from the spring by paying half the normal PP cost and using a quarter-pint of Aerdicsbern water per PP used. Caldheir also has the skill of *herblore* which acts a bonus to finding and using herbs in the wild.

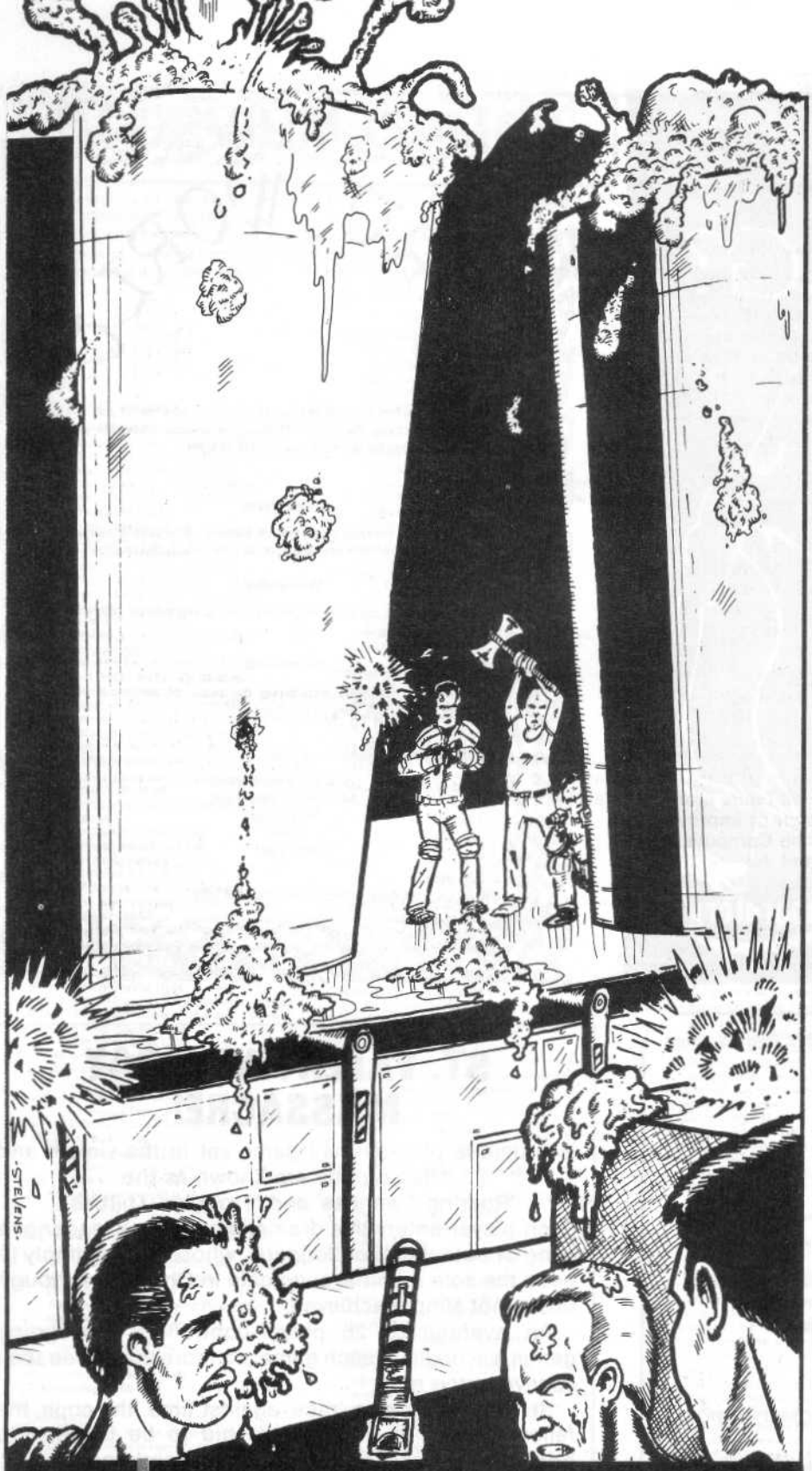
Estrigell is a more eccentric priest. He is an aged (67), itinerant Uerdakyn animist given overmuch to preaching and berating the Gramuz villagers he comes across. At times, his religious fervour gets the better of him and he goes rather mad. You can have the characters encounter Estrigell as the teller of one of the rumours, or as the crazed priest of *Rumour F*. He has a special resistance ability giving him +10 RR vs Essence magic. He possesses two magic items: a belt of woven leather thongs dyed green and stitched with garnets which gives +5 bonus to Base Spells and Directed Spells, and adds 5PP to the wearer's total; and a gold ring carved with the symbol of a hammer which can cast a *spell of stunning* twice per day.

Estrigell is intended to be a nuisance to the player characters, a source of misinformation and annoyance. He is loud and unco-operative at all times, and argues with them, chiding them if they are non-believers and render little help. He may be useful if the characters beg him for assistance and put up with his perorations for a little while. He scorns gifts other than food or useful clothing and items.

statistics

NAME	LEVEL	PP	HITS	AT	DB	MELEE OB	MISSILE OB	NOTES
NÓLËNOROLVAR								
Enadai	15-25	15-50	c.100	CH	40-60	90+Gr/Cr	-	Entwives; Large-Huge
Cánirûth	25	25	121	CH	55	100HGr 110HCr	-	Entwife; Huge
Singalótë	19	38	98	CH	50	95HGr 90LCr	-	Entwife; Large
UERDAKYN								
Caldheir	5	5	46	SL	0	40qs* 30sp	10sb 5sp	Rural Man Animist; St76, Ag49,Co75 Ig58, It90, Pr91, Ap63;

NAME	LEVEL	PP	HITS	AT	DB	MELEE OB	MISSILE OB	NOTES
Protections (5), *Nature's Lore* (5), *Plant Mastery* (5), *Purifications* (5), *Spring Waters* (5)**; Westron (5), Gramuik (5), Éothrik (3), Bethteur (2), Logathig (2); MM +0, Herblore +50, Perception +45, Public Speaking +45, Use Items +40, Swim +35, Stalk/Hide +30, Ride +30, Read Runes +25, Leadership/Influence +20, Directed Spells +15, Base Spells +10; *Quarterstaff* +10 OB and *detect water* within 180'.								
Estrigell	4	8+5*	45	SL	10	30sp 15da	25sp	Rural Man Animist, St79, Ag78, Co43, Ig56, It96, Pr80, Ap26;
Protections (4), *Surface Ways* (4), *Animal Mastery* (4), *Direct Channelling* (4); Westron (5), Gramuik (5), Logathig (3); MM +15, Public Speaking +49, Ride +44, Perception +44, Use Items +29, Stalk/Hide +25, Disarm Traps +20, Directed Spells +23*, Base Spells +13*; *Magic Belt* and *Ring of Stunning*.								
DEL-DÚRIMBË								
Babbad	16	-	173	CH	25	170cl	-	Olog-hai; Large
Grattar	14	-	196	CH	25	162cl	-	Olog-hai; Large
Faroth Morchaint	9	9+12	50	SL	15	79kn* 64sc	59da** 59cp	*Morgul-knife; **Poisoned Half-elf Scout; St66, Ag96, Co50, Ig90, It59, Pr78, Ap96;
Essence Hand (5), *Spirit Mastery* (5), *Spell Ways* (5); Sindarin (5), Westron (5), Morbeth (5), Quenya (2); *Empathy* with Great Bats; MM +15, Perception +81, Stalk/Hide +75, Use Poison +65, Ride +49, Track +44, Flying +40 (+65 with Daeramë), Leadership/Influence +5.								
Daeramë *Mounted* *Unmounted*	5	-	61	SL	 30 60	 50MBi 75MBi/60MCl	-	Great Bat, Spd VF
Vílagaur	15	30	150	NO	65*	100HCl	-	Vampiress; Large, Spd VF*, 5 Spell Lists (% 10); * without magic cloak she is DB 40 and Spd FA.
Thendrik	6	12*	67	SL/+S	25/40	77kn** 67bs 67sp	62sp	* x2 PP mult; ** +10 ivory knife; Gramuz Ranger; St90, Ag91, Co92, Ig39, It83, Pr32, Ap35;
Nature's Guises (6), *Surface Ways* (5), *Spell Defences* (5); Westron (5), Gramuik (5), Morbeth (4), Éothrik (3), Sindarin (3); MM +5, Stalk/Hide +62, Ride +58, Perception +52, Track +48 *, Climb +48, Swim +38, Acting +25, Ambush +15.								



HAPPINESS IS LASER SHAPED

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID STEVENS

An adventure for Paranoia, committed by citizen 'Pete' TAML-Y-NNN

THE TREASON OF SBR SECTOR

■ Everyone in Alpha Complex is Happy. The Computer says so. Can you doubt The Computer?

■ Besides, The Computer kindly ensures that all citizens' food is carefully laced with chemical additives to keep them Happy. This is an example of the kindness and wisdom of The Computer.

■ However, the evil Commies are forever seeking ways in which to make citizens of Alpha Complex Unhappy. Being Unhappy is Treason. It is a sign that you have succumbed to Communist Propaganda.

■ The whole of SBR Sector is currently Unhappy. Our Troubleshooters' mission is to root out the Commie Traitors responsible for this sabotage and terminate them.

■ The citizens of SBR Sector are aware that their Unhappiness is Treason, but many of them are so Unhappy that they have presented themselves for voluntary termination. The Computer realises that so many citizens cannot have become Unhappy by coincidence. Commie sabotage must be responsible. The Computer has mercifully granted a stay of execution for the citizens of SBR Sector.

■ The citizens of SBR Sector should not be Unhappy. If they are it must be because the Commies have put Unhappiness drugs in their food. Interestingly, three citizens in SBR Sector are completely unaffected by the Unhappiness. They are the Director of the Food Vats, citizen Mal-B-ING-3, and his two chief technicians, Di-G-EST-2 and Boltan-G-ULP-5. One of these must be the traitor.

■ Sector SBR has been sealed off for Security Reasons.

KEEPYOURLASERHANDYKEEPYOURLASERHANDYKEEPYOURL

■NOTHING IS EVER SO OBVIOUS

The Computer's conclusions are quite logical given the data it has, but they could not be further from the truth. Well, what did you expect?

What has actually happened is that the R&D unit in neighbouring NTM Sector has been testing a strange antique weapon found on a recent expedition to the Outside. This 'Emotional Control Ray' is designed to demoralise enemy troops. The R&D men, in accordance with established Alpha Complex safety procedures concerning horrifically dangerous arcane weapons, turned it on SBR Sector to see how it worked. Unfortunately it succeeded beyond their wildest dreams and proved quite uncontrollable. Instead of affecting a small group of Infrared workers as was intended, it actually caused severe depression in almost everyone in the sector. The three Food Vat technicians escaped because they happened to be out of the sector at a meeting when the ray was fired.

The R&D men on the project are well aware of what they have done and are

desperately trying to cover up and (unusually for them) make amends. They are working on adapting the machine to fire a Happiness Ray, the effects of which will be felt by the Troubleshooters during their investigation, though they probably won't be very Happy about the results. Doesn't this sound fun already?

Meanwhile there is considerable consternation in SBR Sector. Mal-B, Di-G and Boltan-G know that they are likely to be made scapegoats and are doing everything they can to rectify matters. Unfortunately, this isn't very much. The only thing they can think of is to massively increase the dosage of the Happiness drugs in the food of the people of SBR Sector. (For the benefit of Acute Paranoia junkies who are sticklers for rules and other such useless items, they are increasing Visomorpain doses and adding lots of Gelgernine. The rest of us, of course, will make up the effects as we go along, as usual.) Mal & Co are wise enough to keep some undoctored food back for themselves, but everyone else in SBR Sector will get the new doses shortly.

But there's one of those really wonderful complications that makes the life of the average Troubleshooter such fun. Can you guess? Yes, that's right - there are quite a few other people around who missed out on the ray. The Computer hasn't identified them as possible traitors yet because they haven't come to its attention. However, because of the new drugs they are about to become DELERIOUSLY HAPPY.

Of course, as the sector is sealed off, the Troubleshooters will be unable to get out without good reason. Unless they can find a safe source of food, they too will become DELERIOUSLY HAPPY. This may hamper their investigations a little, though probably no more than usual. This will be fun. But not for them.

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■ A PAIR OF BRIEFINGS

As usual, the Troubleshooters will be summoned individually to their mission via messages from their friend and yours, The Computer. The general alert message is reproduced in the player handouts, together with an extra message for the team leader and briefings for the Troubleshooters from their Secret Societies and Service Groups. Internal Security have asked us to remind all GMs that the damaging of The Computer's property (to wit, valuable copies of *White Dwarf*) in any way is Treason and will be punished in the usual horrendously painful way. Those wishing to photocopy such items should first present form ISFOD-1221-sgx/fc-SEMICOM-s, reproduced elsewhere in this publication, to the appropriate authorities.

The Troubleshooters will need to be briefed about their mission be someone of high security clearance. The character Peter-I from the introductory adventure in the *Paranoia* rulebook will do for this role, although you are welcome to create your own briefing group if you wish. Peter-I will, as usual, be assisted by Ness-Y, the Internal Security man. For the purposes of this adventure it is also necessary to have a technical expert on food production and a witness to the current state of SBR Sector. The recommended characters are as follows:

Floyd-O is the food technology expert from PL&C. He is very enthusiastic about the quality of Alpha Complex food, but he can't tell the Troubleshooters anything about what goes into it because they don't have high enough security clearances. Floyd is a real, gen-u-ine maniac; that much should already have been obvious to anyone who has experienced Alpha Complex food.

Neil-R is a PL&C technician from SBR sector. Like most of his colleagues he is Deeply Depressed. Like, a real bummer, man. We mean, really the pits. Oh wow, is he unhappy! He doesn't really want to be stuck some tedious briefing answering boring questions when he could be being terminated instead. Yes, he's *that* unhappy.

Peter-I explains the basic situation to the Troubleshooters, adding little to the information that The Computer has already given them in the Mission Alert. He says that the trouble began about an hour after the breakfast cycle (it is now two hours after breakfast) and shows no sign of improving. He does not pass on The Computer's suspicions about Mal-B and his colleagues; this information is cleared for the Troubleshooter leader only. Peter-I can, of course, take the leader aside and discuss this with him. That will give the rest of the team something to worry about, which should be encouraged at every opportunity (no point calling the game *Paranoia* if everyone has a really good time, now is there?).

Once the Troubleshooters have satisfied themselves that they can get no more out of Neil-R (or Peter-I has got bored with the pointless interrogation and ordered them to get a move on or he'll terminate them so fast their boots won't have time to smoke) they can head off to their local PL&C depot for some equipment. As usual, the depot staff are anything but helpful. After the manner of sales assistants on the fresh food counter of any supermarket, they shuffle around slowly but determinedly preparing things, cleaning things, filling in forms and rearranging shelves, seemingly oblivious to the fact that someone is trying to get served. When the team do finally force one of them to pay attention he immediately says that he is not qualified to deal with their enquiry and disappears off to 'fetch the boss'. This takes at least 15 minutes as the staff have to stop for a cup of coffee before returning to the counter under the new regulations imposed by the Computer not five minutes previously.

Eventually, however, the Troubleshooters will get issued with their equipment. They may start to feel, at last, that they are getting somewhere. How wrong could they be? Here's what they get:

1 Multicorder I with the following programs: Recorder, Bot Damage Analysis, Lie detector
1 Com I communicator per Troubleshooter
1 Model V Docbot (ie, a Docbot with Medical Skill 7)
1 Jackobot 350 with the following skills: Tech (1), Robotics (2), Robot Operation (3), Operate Docbot (6), Robot Maintenance (3), Maintain Docbot (6), Maintain Jackobot (6), Engineering (2), Industrial Engineering (5), Chemical Engineering (5), Vehicles (1), Vehicle Operation and Repair (2), Autocar Operation & Repair (5).

All requests for extra weaponry will be denied. After all, the Troubleshooters are hardly going anywhere dangerous, are they? Also no food will be supplied, no matter how much the Troubleshooters beg. Regulations say that food can only be supplied to Troubleshooters who are going to be outside Alpha Complex during normal meal times.

The Troubleshooters are then directed to R&D where they are to collect an experimental Pocket Assay system. This is for use in analysing the food being prepared in SBR Sector. Sadistic GMs may like to devise some additional, fearsomely bizarre experimental equipment with which to hinder the Troubleshooters. Go on, do it. You know your players will love you for it.

Thus equipped, the Troubleshooters are ferried by autocar to the entrance of SBR Sector and unceremoniously shoved inside. There is no immediate danger (surprise!), as the inhabitants of SBR Sector are all far too Depressed to do anything much. All of the citizens encountered in SBR will be similar in attitude to Neil-R. They will have names like Art-R-DNT and say things like, 'Troubleshooters, eh? This is it then, we're all going to be terminated.' The bots have also been affected by the Unhappiness Ray, but the symptoms are less obvious (eg, they worry constantly about their parts being about to wear out). The fact that the bots are unhappy should alert the Troubleshooters to the fact that The Computer's theory has a few holes in it, so it should not be made too obvious, although it can be great fun watching Troubleshooters trying to prove to bots that their parts are OK: 'OK Transbot JUG-R-NORT-5, let's see you try those faulty brakes...'

After a good deal of frustrating interrogation, during the course of which you get to do lots of really impressive impersonations of people who have completely lost the will to live (just remember the state your players were in at the end of your last session), the Troubleshooters should be allowed to find someone sufficiently alive to guide them to the office of the Food Vat controllers.

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■ THE PRIME SUSPECTS

The three senior technicians mentioned in the team leader's briefing are high on The Computer's list of possible suspects. Furthermore, they know far more about how the Food Vats are run than anyone else in the sector.

Floyd-O

Mal-B-ING is a very competent politician. As a Programs Group member he has quickly risen through the ranks to this prestigious office. He knows nothing whatsoever about food technology, of course, and his technicians can often run rings round him on this score. Nevertheless, he is quite capable of playing them off against each other and causing them to get the blame for his mistakes. Di-G and Boltan-G can't quite understand how this happens.

Mal-B is nervous of the presence of the Troubleshooters and would prefer to delay them until the heavy doses of Happiness drugs take effect, whereupon he hopes they will go away. If they prove too clever he will try to get rid of them, but he is fairly sure that they will be typically incompetent and, if left to their own devices, will get rid of themselves. You agree? We somehow thought you might...

Di-G-EST is a devout member of Corpore Metal and as such is firmly of the opinion that the job of food preparation could be done much better by robots. In fact she is dead right, but if robots did all the work what would there be left for all those dumb Infrareds to do? Di-G would be quite happy to see the entire sector terminated and replaced by robot workers and is not very good at hiding this fact. She is too naive to realise that this is making her the most likely scapegoat.

If the Troubleshooters humour her ideas she will be quite happy to assist them. Because of this, she is the best potential ally that the Troubleshooters have. She is also the person they are most likely to shoot first.

Boltan-G-ULP is a Humanist. He has his suspicions concerning Di-G's allegiance but cannot prove them. He sees the crisis as an ideal opportunity to get rid of her. To this end he will make use of the Troubleshooters, but the more they play the role of loyal servants of The Computer, the more he will come to regard them with contempt. He certainly won't help them get safe food, no matter what.

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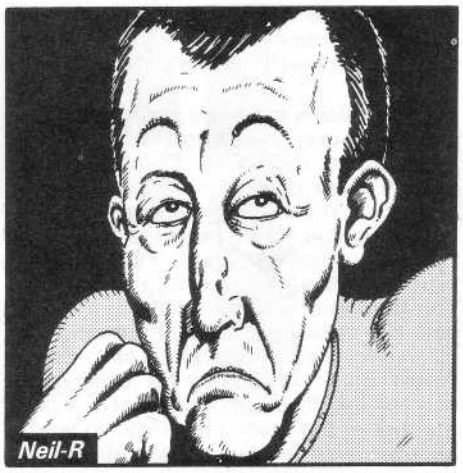
■ AT THE VATS

In order to get the Troubleshooters busily occupied, Mal-B suggests that they go the the Food Vats and interview the technicians responsible for the monitoring of levels of biochemical supplements in the food. These are Fanny-O and her assistant, Jonny-R. The other two think this is a great idea too, so the Troubleshooters are bound to get really suspicious at this point, but it really would be a good idea if they went, if only because that's the next bit of the adventure. Linear plots? Us? How dare you!

The Food Vats are, as you might have imagined, giant metal tubs full of squishy and sloshy grean and yellow gunk that leaps and plops about with disgusting abandon. Every so often a harrassed-looking Infrared in heavily stained and singed overalls rushes up to one of the vats and slaps an overactive bit back with a large stick. This stuff is, erm, lively.


Neil-R

Fanny-O-CDK is overbearingly proud of her skill at food preparation and will make sure that she misses no opportunity to inform the Troubleshooters of this, using her accomplished (and highly convenient) Oratory skills (65%) if necessary. Nevertheless she is obviously Depressed as she moans ceaselessly about how her efforts are not appreciated by the culinary philistines of Alpha Complex. This is always the case, and she knows it, but at the moment it seems to be affecting her even more than usual. This moaning may cause her to give away clues as to her Romantics membership (the odd reference to the legendary master-chefs, Ronald MacDonald and J Wellington Wimpy, for example). However, you should do his best to keep Fanny-O alive for the moment as you may need her to point the Troubleshooters in the right direction later in the adventure.

Jonny-R-CDK is very quiet and submissive, like a sad-eyed spaniel who knows the meaty chunks have run out. He gets ordered around by Fanny-O as if he were an Infrared, spending most of his time stirring beakers of chemicals and cleaning spoons for Fanny-O who is very fastidious about kitchen hygiene. Jonny-R is probably the only person in SBR Sector whose personality has not changed in the slightest as a result of the Unhappiness Ray.

Needless to say, Fanny-O will be deeply insulted by any suggestion that she has been lax or incompetent at her job. Indeed, she takes this as further evidence of the lack of taste of the typical Alpha Complex citizen and redoubles her Oratory efforts, harranguing passing groups of Infrareds if the Troubleshooters seem unaffected. This will undoubtedly make a few people's trigger fingers very itchy, but they can't vape her there and then, because suddenly...

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■ THE END IS NIGH

Just when the Troubleshooters start to think that if they want to see any shooting they'd better start it themselves, beginning with Fanny-O, a little light entertainment bursts onto the scene. A group of Purgists from SBR, being Very Depressed Indeed, have come to the inevitable conclusion that The Computer has decided to terminate their entire sector (which may not be too far from the truth). Knowing that they are even more doomed than usual, they have decided to go out in a blaze of glory, destroying as much as they can on the way. As obvious servants of The Computer, the Troubleshooters are prime targets for early elimination. Heh! Heh! Heh! (Oh, sorry, but we like this bit.)

The Purgists are identified only by their nicknames. Their real names are not important, and in any case they will not answer to them even if the Troubleshooters could find out what they were (also we got bored with thinking up yet more silly names for a bunch of turkeys who are only going to be so much dead algae before the end of the next paragraph). Their tactics are not particularly intelligent, even for cannon-fodder: they will shoot back at whoever shot at them last, and will happily smash up machinery if no suitable target presents itself in any particular round. However, although few in number, they are much better armed than the Troubleshooters, who will need their wits about them. Any weaponry they manage to capture intact will serve them in good stead later in the adventure.

Mal-B-ING

The area in which the fight takes place is the Food Vats production line. This takes the form of a giant conveyer belt taking huge vats of glutinous-looking (ie, squidgy) gunge from one end of a very long room to the other. At various stages along the route there are large tanks of ingredients hung from the ceiling which pump

additional slop into the moving vats, and enormous whisks which plunge into the revolting material and mix it all together. All this sticky, gooey stuff is likely to get spread everywhere by the effects of sporadic laser fire. The overall atmosphere of the battle should be something like a custard pie fight where the pies are 20 feet across and the worst shade of pinky-greeny-bleaaaghhh imaginable. When they are finished the vats should look like someone inflated and burst a two-tonne octopus in a confined space. (If you are using miniatures for your game you may care to simulate this for the enjoyment of your players. All you need is a good size octopus and a bicycle pump. Simply insert the, oh, what? You want us to get back to the storyline? Oh, alright then, but it's your loss...)

Captain Crash: Yellow laser rifle (39%); 10 grenades (45%), yellow reflec armour; hand-to-hand (25%).

Crazy Axe: Battle axe (53%); hand-to-hand (48%); no armour; damage bonus +1; macho bonus -2.

Napalm Nick: Orange laser pistol (47%); Slugthrower with 10 Napalm rounds (47%); hand-to-hand (28%); orange/red reflec armour.

■ MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE OFFICE

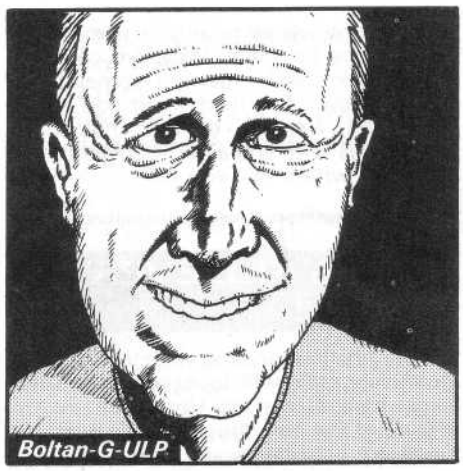
While the Troubleshooters have been busy 'interrogating' Fanny-O and Jonny-R (if that's what you call it), Mal-B and his

Di-G-EST

assistants have been busy finalising the details of the Happiness drugs that they are going to add to the food. They now need to get the Troubleshooters away from the vats so their plan can be put into operation. Mal-B is counting on the fact that, having interviewed Fanny-O when she was ignorant of what was going on, they won't want to come back for a second dose when there is a danger of her revealing his scheme to them.

Fanny-O also wants to get the Troubleshooters out of her hair, and out of her ruined vats. She is livid about the mess that the fight with the Purgists has caused (and about the state of the poor unfortunate octopus) and will take out her frustration on anyone left alive. This should (hopefully) mean (at least some of) the Troubleshooters whom she immediately reports to Mal-B via a comlink. Mal-B grasps the opportunity and demands that the (remaining) Troubleshooters return to his office to explain themselves. If by some mischance Fanny-O has suffered premature termination you will have to work out your own scheme for getting the Troubleshooters back to the office. No, we're sorry, stop snivelling. If you can't even do that we've no sympathy for you.

The interview with Mal-B is fairly short and not nearly as difficult as he made out over the comlink. After all, Mal-B knows he is a prime suspect and doesn't want to upset the Troubleshooters too much, and Di-G and Boltan-G are far too busy sniping at each other (not literally! Well, if you insist...). Futhermore, the meeting is interrupted before he can much more than sneer, 'So, we meet again, friend


Boltan-G-ULP

Troubleshooters', by a worker who insists on talking to the team.

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Alun-R-MRT-6 is a Tech Services worker who was in SBR Sector fetching a broken-down Transbot when the Unhappiness Ray was fired. Furthermore, he hasn't eaten anything in the sector for the simple reason that his mutant power is Matter-Eating and he prefers the taste of metal to organic food. He has demanded to see the Troubleshooters because, in his Depressed state, he has decided to confess his power in the hope of being terminated. Although he has very useful information, the Troubleshooters will have to work out the implications of his confession for themselves.

Mal-B is happy to let the Troubleshooters go off with this crackpot before finding out what he actually has to say. He wants to keep them occupied for a while so he can get some drugged food prepared ready for them to eat. Alun-R provides an ideal and lengthy distraction, not least because he has a peculiar way of... talking that... demands he... leave an inexplicable three second silence before... using any verb. Once they have finished he directs Di-G and Boltan-G to arrange some lunch for the hardworking Troubleshooters. It is then up to them to play the two technicians off against each other in the hope of getting a safe meal. You shouldn't deliberately force the Troubleshooters to accept drugged food, of course, but if they are foolish enough to accept it when offered...

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Fanny-O-CDK

■ JERRY'S PRIVATE ARMY

Just as the Troubleshooters are finishing their lunch The Computer demands their attention. (If they are about to eat drugged food and you want to terminate them in a seemingly fairer manner you may like to have this happen just before the meal. However, it will be much more fun if they get to go into the next fight Deleriously Happy. Why? Don't ask stupid questions. Just do it and watch the results if you really want to know.)

■ Attention Troubleshooters. A dangerous mutant with the highly treasonous ability of Machine Empathy has confessed his power at a booth in the residential area of SBR Sector. Unfortunately the traitor has refused to report for termination. It is Imperative that this highly dangerous Traitor is Eliminated. You will proceed with this task AT ONCE, and without futher delay. Failure to comply with this order will result in Immediate Termination.

Bright Troubleshooters will quickly realise that The Computer is very frightened of citizens with Machine Empathy powers (whatever they are). You should read the above in a panicky tone which gradually gets more high-pitched and more hysterical towards the end. GMs who enjoy ham acting may wish to put on a tinny voice and scream 'Ex-terminate Him!' while wildly waving their extendable plungers at the end of the message.

Citizen Jerry-B-ULT-1 has been very unlucky. He has managed to keep his dangerous power a secret for a long time and has risen high in both the CPU and Corpore Metal. Thanks to his robot friends he was even aware of the fact that SBR Sector was bathed in mysterious radiation earlier in the day. However, in his newly Depressed state he has taken this as an indication that he and his robots are out of favour with The Computer. In an attempt to get back into The Computer's good books he confessed his power. Of course, since The Computer is his friend, he was ordered to present himself for termination, the result of which was that he stormed off in a sulk muttering, 'The Computer doesn't love me anymore'. He has since convinced several robots of The Computer's infidelity and they are now preparing to make a final stand.

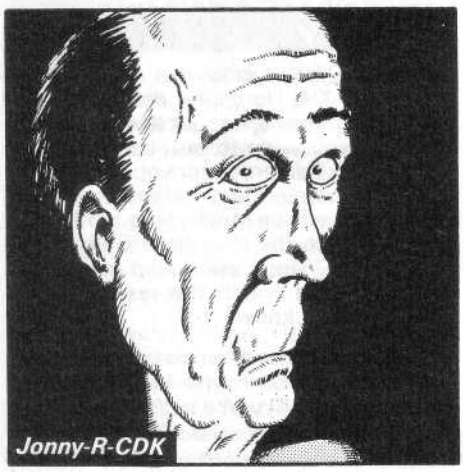
Jerry-B has at his disposal 2 Guardbots, a Model III Docbot and 4 Scrubots. He also has a Mk II Multicorder programmed with Recorder, Bot Damage Analysis, Radioactivity, Infrared and Radio/Radar.

Guardbot: 2 sonic pistols (50%); 2 stun guns (50%); a tangler (50%); Kevlar armour.

Scrubot: 4 brooms which act as truncheons (40%); plate armour.

Jerry-B: Laser rifle (50%) with a ROYGB barrel and matching reflec armour; 10 grenades (40%).

Docbot will tend to Jerry-B while he is still alive, after which it will try to operate on anyone who attacked him - treat as force sword attack (45%). It has no armour.


Jonny-R-CDK

All of the bots will need reprogramming to remove the effects of Jerry-B's power.

Following the Guardbots' advice, Jerry-B has holed up in his apartment. The only entrances are through the front door or via a window 15 storeys up. Access to the door is via a corridor which is long enough to ensure that Jerry and the Guardbots get two good shots from cover at anyone blatantly rushing up it. There are no doorways in which to shelter for 50m, and the corridor is painted bright blue. You should remind the Troubleshooters that simply stepping into that corridor is a treasonous offence, and if they delay give them a sharp verbal prod from the ever-vigilant and somewhat hysterical Computer.

Anyone entering the apartment will immediately be mobbed by the Scrubots while Jerry-B and the Guardbots retreat to the doorways to the kitchen (1 Guardbot) and bedroom (Jerry-B and second Guardbot) and continue to pepper the invaders from cover. The Docbot stays in the bedroom.

If the Troubleshooters survive this, erm, encounter they will be able to examine Jerry-B's Multicorder which is running Radioactivity as a permanent background task in case of further bombardments. Troubleshooters who have had the brains to talk to their enemy may even have discovered why this is being done, or they may get the information from surviving bots. Assuming that they are neither dead nor fast asleep the team should be getting an inkling of what is going on. It is

Alun-R-MRT-6

therefore necessary to provide some more distractions for them. Well, we can't let them think they're getting somewhere, can we now? The next thing you know they'll be wanting to run their own adventures with you as a Troubleshooter, and then where will you be?

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▪ LET'S KILL EVERYBODY!!

Having finished dealing with Jerry-B, the Troubleshooters will doubtless to be keen to get back on the job. Unfortunately the effects of the new drugs in SBR Sector's lunch are now beginning to be felt...

There are some citizens of SBR Sector who missed out on the Unhappiness Ray and are therefore getting DELERIOUSLY HAPPY. As luck would have it, most of them seem to be Death Leopard members, yeah! Now they are pretty Happy folks most of the time, and being more Happy just makes them more happy-go-lucky, yeah! Anyone for a quick spot of random destruction? Yeah! Let's start with that group of Troubleshooters. YEAH!!

As the Troubleshooters leave the remains of the apartment block where Jerry lived and make their way across a crowded plaza full of nervous Infrareds, a warning explosion sounds above their heads. The infamous Capitol Hill Mob are about to go out with a BANG, a CRUMP and a BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA!

The Mob just happened (isn't it funny the way things always 'just happen' in Alpha Complex) to be having a group meeting this morning in their secret lair inside a transbot's container. This shielded them from the effects of the Unhappiness Ray. Now they are high on Happiness and determined to kill everything that moves, as well as quite a few things that don't move too. They've dragged out every weapon they can lay their hands on and are not going to waste a single piece of ammunition.

The leaders of the gang, Tricky Dicky, Henry, Spiro and Al, are perched on balconies around the Plaza where they can get a good field of fire. Tricky Dicky is the Mob's leader, Henry is the brains of the group, and Spiro and Al are high grade thugs. All four will try their best to outdo the others in spectacular acts of destruction. Like the Purgists, they will answer only to their society nicknames.

The more lowly members, 8 'worms' and 5 'persons', are about to mix it on the floor of the plaza. They don't really care who they shoot at, but are likely to give preference to anyone who shoots back.

The plaza is, as mentioned above, packed with Infrareds. These meandering plot devices are here to serve a number of important dramatic functions: a) they get in the way of everything the Troubleshooters try to do; b) they ensure that every time a shot is fired someone, somewhere gets killed; c) some of them are needed for the next section; and d) they make life impossible for those boring stick-in-the-muds who insist on trying to run *Paranoia* combat with figures and floorplans. Gah! We 'ates 'em, don't we my preshus? Ahem.

Tricky Dicky: Green laser pistol (38%); Cone rifle (43%) with 20 HE slugs; 10 grenades (35%); hand-to-hand (35%); ROYG reflec armour.

Henry: Yellow laser pistol (26%); Energy Pistol (26%); Tangler (26%); hand-to-hand (31%); yellow reflec armour; weapon maintenance (47%).

Spiro: Red laser pistol (55%); hand-to-hand (23%); red reflec armour; Electroshock mutant power.

Al: Red laser pistol (42%); Flamethrower (42%); hand-to-hand (25%); red reflec armour.

'Person': Red laser pistol (30%); knife (35%); hand-to-hand (30%).

'Worm': Truncheon (30%); knife (30%); hand-to-hand (25%).

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▪ HAPPINESS RAINS

Eventually R&D in NTM Sector manage to get their Happiness Ray working and fire it at SBR Sector. As luck would have it, this happens just as the Troubleshooters finish dealing with the Capitol Hill Mob. The result is yet more of that truly wonderful stuff - chaos. Everyone who fails an Insanity Check suddenly becomes DELERIOUSLY HAPPY (if they weren't that far gone already, in which case they'll probably die of Happiness, smiling themselves to death).

Now then, remember all those Infrareds wandering around the plaza? Did any of them survive? What are they going to do now? Use your warped imagination! Have them dash up to Troubleshooters, drag them out of their seats and try to get them to dance. How about having a huge conga round the plaza? If you're into sound effects and background music in your game, play them a few of those awful songs written for use in discos in Torremolinos at a mind-wiping volume. All the Infrareds love to join in with 'Y Viva Alpha Complex' and 'Hold a Commie in the air, stick a Tac-nuke up your nose, buy a Jumbobot and then...' Be insistently, grindingly, excruciatingly cheerful. Yes, even more cheerful than you'll be when

you order everyone's termination at the end of the adventure (if not sooner).

Of course, everyone else in SBR Sector is DELERIOUSLY HAPPY as well. They're not going to stand by and let the Infrareds and Troubleshooters have all the fun. They come rushing out of their factories, shops and offices to join in. Everyone wants to have a really wonderful party. They have names like Steve-R-ITE, Mike-R-EED and Ken-Y-EVT, and behave accordingly (pass the sick-bag freely amongst your ailing players). Some of them might have weapons. Some of them might even let a few off by accident, or mistake them for firecrackers and make lots of pretty lights for everyone to enjoy.

And we mustn't forget the bots, must we? Yes, it's time to put on your silly voice again and to roll out a whole collection of really cranky personality modules. Would you believe a barbot called Bruz-4-SYTH? Or a scrubot called Grouch-0 Mk X? The Troubleshooters should have just made Insanity Checks. It's up to you to make sure the players know what their characters are going through, so let your hair down and be really nauseating just for once.

Unfortunately for the R&D men, the Happiness Ray also causes a lot of vibration, and those Troubleshooters who are still sane (you mean there are some? Surely not?) will have little trouble pin-pointing the source. All they have to do now is get safely out of SBR Sector (not an easy job with all those loonies about), get into the NTM Sector R&D section and prove their point (without getting killed by the R&D men). A nice, routine little job.

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THE NIGHT THEY RAIDED PL&C

By now the Troubleshooters should have quite an impressive collection of hardware looted from the various maniacs they have disposed of along the way. (If they haven't had enough brains to collect better weaponry as they came across it they are probably all dead by now. However, if they are going to get into NTM R&D (and out again) alive they will need a lot more than they have got.)

Fortunately, everyone in SBR Sector is now totally whacko and happy to give out all sorts of pretty pressies to people who ask for them. Is there a PL&C depot about? Does it have any weapons in stock? You betcha!!

Of course, novice *Paranoia* players are unlikely to think of anything subtle like this and will probably be happy to get out of SBR Sector with their lives. Novice GMs who still haven't learnt how to be properly sadistic may like to have some PL&C guy wander into the plaza giving out free drugs (like Thymoglandin, Benetridin and Dynomorphin) as a hint. If your pals don't get that one we suggest you let them get back to something more their level, like trying to lick their ears or glueing dogs to ceilings or something.

In PL&C the Troubleshooters can find the following goodies:

Citizen Jerry-B-ULT-1

2 Cone Rifles with 30 ECM and 10 dum-dum slugs apiece
1 hand flamer
Some laser barrels - 4 red, 2 yellow 1 blue
1 Slugthrower with 10 HE slugs
1 Force Sword
1 Gauss Gun
1 Plasma Generator

Of course, faced with all this super weaponry, they couldn't perhaps be persuaded to turn it on each other, could they? After all, only one person can have the Plasma Generator at once. Also, if the R&D representative in the group is still alive he'd better do something pretty quickly: it's unlikely that his colleagues will be so trusting as to take him with them. (OK, OK, we know that an average Troubleshooter group will have wiped itself out twice over by now, but we World Famous Game Designers have our delusions of artistic grandeur, and it seemed somehow appropriate that this should be the point in the plot where all the in-fighting started in earnest. That it actually happened ninety seconds into the adventure is neither here nor there, so stop moaning and get on with the game. Sometimes we don't know why we bother...)

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R&D'S GUILTY SECRET

Getting out of SBR Sector might prove slightly problematical because The Computer is well aware of what is going on and has stationed five Vulture Squadron goons (Green laser rifles, 75%; combat armour) at the door to keep the happy loonies safely inside. Experienced Troubleshooters will either be able to convince The Computer of the urgency of their mission, or will simply set the Plasma Generator up behind the closed door and fire away. Inexperienced Troubleshooters will just yelp a little and turn black at the edges.

Getting into NTM Sector's R&D department is another matter entirely. The technicians have the approaches to their offices well under surveillance and are expecting trouble. At the first sign of anything looking like Troubleshooters (or Vulture Squadron goons) they throw caution to the wind and roll out everything they've got. Either The Computer is on to them, in which case what the heck, or the foolish Troubleshooters haven't yet told The Computer what is going on, in which case the sooner they fall foul of an experimental accident of the violent kind the better.

When the Troubleshooters first arrive at the door and demand entrance the R&D men aren't quite ready. There will be a small delay while the Troubleshooters argue over the comlink with the man on the other side of the door. Unfortunately all R&D departments are, by order of The Computer, surrounded by very, very thick blast-proof shielding (to stop explosions from getting out rather than enemies from getting in) and it would take the Troubleshooters many hours to burn their way through. However, after a few

Brian-I-ACK

minutes the man on the other side of the door suddenly changes his mind and says he's opening the door straight away. Any Troubleshooters stupid enough to be stood directly in front of it when it does open deserve all they get.

On the other side of the door is an experimental plasma cannon. It is big. It is so big that it just cannot miss, unless the Troubleshooters happen to be hiding behind the door, in which case they are out of the cone of fire. It also has a +2 damage modifier. Fortunately, as is the way with experimental plot devices of this nature, it fires once, overloads, and promptly melts down into a heap of red-hot metal.

Did they survive that one? Yes? Well, let's try again, shall we? Behind the plasma cannon is a 100m long passage, the sort of building structure known in Alpha Complex as a 'shooting gallery'. After their experiences with Jerry-B the Trouble-shooters should have more sense than to rush this one. If they just sit it out for a few minutes the five (count 'em) warbots hiding behind a door at the other end wander down to see what is happening. That way the Troubleshooters get the fun instead. Well, it makes a change.

Warbots: 2 semi-automatic slugthrowers with HEAT rounds (70%); 2 sonic rifles (70%); laminated combat armour.

Once the warbots are out of the way the passage is quite safe, though you shouldn't give the team that impression. It leads, as might be expected, to the

equipment issue office. This is a largish room with a clear area at the front for demonstrating new devices and several racks of assorted junk towards the back. Right at the back are two doors, one leading to the director's office and the other to the research lab. Several R&D technicians armed with the latest in bizarre weaponry are hiding behind the racks ready to ambush anyone who makes it that far. They are assisted by 3 experimental combots.

Spect-O-MTR carries a semi-automatic slugthrower (55%) for which he has 5 rounds of a new hallucinogenic gas. Anyone caught in the gas cloud must make a 2d10 Endurance check. Failure means the victim starts seeing everyone as demons and must roll at random to see who he fires at for each of the next 5 rounds. When the gas shells are used up Spect reverts to AP rounds. He wears orange reflec armour.

Bunsen-B-RNR has 3 Dirt Gas grenades (40%). These are just like normal grenades except that whoever they hit gets coated in concentrated black slime which halves the effect of any reflec armour. Icky! Once he has used these he resorts to a blue laser rifle (55%). He wears ROYGB reflec armour.

Uran-Y-UMM is wearing a variant of the Waldo/Mechano exo-skeleton. This gives him a damage bonus of +3 and acts as combat armour. He fights hand-to-hand (47%) with a giant bench top as a club (2 shifts right on the damage table compared to an ordinary club). The exo-skeleton has a 10% malfunction chance. When it goes wrong it really goes wrong, though, and in accordance with the basic rule of *Paranoia* the silliest most dangerous thing you can think of happens immediately.

Gamma-R-AYE uses a highly experimental Model HPL Radflamer (35%). This acts like a traditional firethrower except that the target is bathed in a mysterious green radiance which turns whatever it touches into a hideous, putrescent ooze (use the hit location table to find which part of the target's body melts away). Yes, this is a nasty one. Gamma-R has been entrusted with this awesome device because it has a 20% malfunction rate and is likely to blow up in his face, whereupon it catches everyone within 5m in its 'unearthly glow'.

Combot: 2 Energy Blasters (65%); 2 Neurowhips (75%); laminated combat armour.

And so to the labs where our intrepid heroes (well, lucky survivors) come face to face with the director of R&D for NTM sector, Brian-I-ACK. He has only one weapon, but it is huge. No, make that gigantic. There is lots of it, too, and it has all sorts of vicious looking barrels and antennae poking out of it. It is, in fact, the machine that fires the Emotion Control Ray, but the Troubleshooters aren't to know that (they'd only worry if they did). You should explain this terrifying-looking machine to the players in graphic detail, ending with the simple statement that it is pointing straight at them, that there is nowhere to run, and that Brian-I has his finger on a big, red button.

Brian-I is bluffing, of course. The Emotion Control Ray Generator takes hours to set up and fire, and without his colleagues (who are presumably all dead by now) he couldn't fire it anyway. However, if the Troubleshooters show any sign of hesitation he will launch into an explanation as to how he is standing behind a mighty Fanthorpe Field Generator, a machine capable of destroying the whole of Alpha Complex if fired. Now, he doesn't want to destroy the whole place any more than the Troubleshooters do, but they do seem to be out to get him, so if they'll just take a seat over there perhaps they can talk terms.

If the Troubleshooters are daft enough to comply with this ridiculous request Brian-I will kick a button and send them all falling into a vat of concentrated acid. Finis. End of Troubleshooters. You may now be saying to yourself, 'Gosh guys, that's a bit sudden!', and you'd be right, but so what? You want happy endings you can write your own adventures. Good Troubleshooters (ie, live ones) should have learnt to shoot first and ask questions later. Or at least never to believe anything anyone tells them - and then shoot them.

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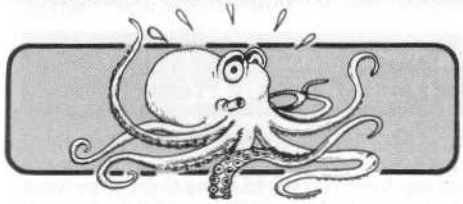
■ EPILOGUE

In which we come to the famous debriefing session. What have the Troubleshooters done that might conceivably get them into hot water? Wrecked a valuable food production line? Invaded a blue level accommodation corridor? Destroyed large numbers of valuable bots? (Did they retrieve the brains of any bots they sliced up?) Raided a PL&C depot and stole several high-clearance weapons? Murdered five valuable Vulture Squadron troopers? Caused severe damage to an R&D installation, including the massacre of several technicians and the director? Destroyed a number of irreplaceable experimental weapons? Stopped lots of citizens from being DELERIOUSLY HAPPY? Any GM who can't think up a way to have the whole bunch of them terminated on the spot is just not trying. Besides which, it saves having to explain it all.

This adventure has been beaten into shape with a large stick by Marc Gascoigne, who would like to apologise for the gratuitous octopus references. Games Workshop has always been a champion of cephalopod equality and such jolly pranks as described in the text are not intended to cause offence or distress to our underwater friends, even if they are all squiggly and rubbery and have evil little eyes and wriggle about and make people feel ill and have...



Pregenerated Troubleshooters

Bottel-O-BEA-2 (Mission Leader)

Primary Attributes: STR 9; END 16; AGI 9; DEX 5; MOX 9; CHU 18; MEC 13; POW 13
Secondary Attributes: Car 25; Dam 0; Mac -1; Mel -2%; AW -10%; Com -2%; Bel +17%; Rep +4%
Service Group: HPD&MC
Secret Society: Mystics (rank 2)
Mutant Power: Mental Block
Skills: Basics 1 (20%), Aimed Weapons 2 (15%), Lasers 3 (20%), Melee 2 (23%), Knife 3 (28%); Personal Development 1 (20%), Leadership 2 (25%), Motivation 3 (30%); Hostile Environments 1 (20%), Old Reckoning 2 (23%), Primitive Warfare 2 (23%), Primitive Melee 3 (28%)
Extra Equipment: Reflec armour and laser barrel are Red/Orange

Secret Society Mission Information

Understandably the Mystics are very interested in the possibility of a mind-altering drug that can affect an entire sector. If The Computer's theory is correct, you must identify this drug and bring sample of it back for the Society to study.

The Society also has evidence of intense Armed Forces interest in the goings on in SBR Sector. High level pressure has resulted in an Armed Forces operative being assigned to your group. Keep a close eye on him.

Service Group Mission Information

Don't be ridiculous; since when did HPD&MC know anything about what is really going on?

Unda-R-EST-1

Primary Attributes: STR 13; END 18; AGI 9; DEX 10; MOX 4; CHU 14; MEC 20; POW 6
Secondary Attributes: Car 30; Dam 0; Mac -1; Mel -2%; AW -1%; Com -20%; Bel +7%; Rep +20%
Service Group: Technical Services
Secret Society: Corpore Metal (rank 1)
Mutant Power: Advanced Touch
Skills: Basics 1 (20%), Aimed Weapons 2 (24%), Weapon Maintenance 2 (50%); Technical Services 1 (20%), Robotics 2 (45%), Robot Maintenance 3 (55%)

Secret Society Mission Information

Corpore Metal has discovered that The Computer suspects the source of the treason in SBR to be a senior technician in the sector's Food Vats. Corpore Metal has a valued operative amongst these technicians. She is working hard to promote the further mechanisation of food production. Your mission is to make sure that this valuable colleague is not convicted of treason during the investigation.

Service Group Mission Information

Swiz-R-OLL-1 claims to be from Technical Services but you've never heard of him. Therefore it seems likely that he is a spy of some sort, probably from Internal Security. Be very wary of him.

Styko-R-OCK-1

Primary Attributes: STR 16; END 13; AGI 15; DEX (8) 14; MOX 15; CHU 8; MEC 16; POW 6
Secondary Attributes: Car 45; Dam +1; Mac 0; Mel +10%; AW +7%; Com +7%; Bel -5%; Rep +10%
Service Group: Armed Services
Secret Society: Death Leopard (rank 1)
Mutant Power: Superior Dexterity
Skills: Basics 1 (20%), Melee 2 (35%), Unarmed Combat 3 (45%), Aimed Weapons 2 (32%), Lasers 3 (37%), Laser Pistol 4 (42%)

Note: Styko has confessed his mutant power. He knew that Armed Forces would be happy to keep him. Besides, it gives him a good excuse to kill people when they pick on him for being a mutie and having a yellow streak down his

Secret Society Mission Information

Hey! A mission, and traitors to execute! GREAT!! Let's go kill people! Wouldn't it be funny if we executed all the wrong people (hee! hee!). Then the Commies might pull this stunt again and we could get to kill more people! Yeah!!

By the way, look out for the famous Capitol Hill Mob. They're based in SBR and they may take the opportunity of all this trouble to pull something spectacular.

Service Group Mission Information

Armed Forces has received information that almost the entire population of SBR Sector has committed treasonous acts. This seems like a marvellous opportunity to launch a punitive expedition and test out a few new crowd control tactics. You must make sure that the Troubleshooters' report recommends such a solution to the problem.

Interestingly R&D have been very keen to block such a move on Armed Forces' part. There will be a R&D operative in your group. Watch him closely.

Swiz-R-OLL-1

Primary Attributes: STR 12; END 17; AGI 13; DEX 10; MOX 10; CHU 8; MEC 13; POW 15
Secondary Attributes: Car 25; Dam 0; Mac -1; Mel +5%; AW -1%; Com -1%; Bel -5%; Rep +4%.
Service Group: Internal Security (cover Technical Services)
Secret Society: First Church of Christ Computer Programmer (rank 1)
Mutant Power: Telepathic Projection
Skills: Basics 1 (20%), Melee 2 (30%), Aimed Weapons 2 (24%), Lasers 3 (29%), Special Services 2 (24%)

Secret Society Mission Information

A lot of high level politicking has been going on with regard to this mission. It seems likely that various self-interested groups are trying to exploit the situation in SBR Sector for their own ends. You must make sure that the interests of The Computer are correctly served.

Service Group Mission Information

As the Internal Security plant on this mission you are responsible for making sure that everything goes according to plan. Your major responsibility is detection of traitors in the Troubleshooter group. Internal Security has reason to believe that the mission leader is a traitor working for the Mystics secret society. These people are all drug addicts. Interestingly The Computer suspects that drugs may have been used to perform the sabotage in SBR Sector.

Your cover is that of a Tech Services operative. Unfortunately Internal Security was unable to prevent another member of Tech Services being assigned to the group. He may be suspicious of you. This failure was due to concentrating on attempts to combat the suspiciously keen interest that both Armed Forces and R&D have been showing in the mission. Both have operatives in the Troubleshooter group.

Rowland-R-ATT-1

Primary Attributes: STR 15; END 10; AGI 12; DEX 12; MOX 17; CHU 14; MEC 9; POW 9
Secondary Attributes: Car 40; Dam +1; Mac 0; Mel +3%; AW +3%; Com +12%; Bel +7%; Rep -2%
Service Group: Production, Logistics and Commissary
Secret Society: Sierra Club (rank 1)
Mutant Power: Advanced Smell
Skills: Basics 1 (20%), Aimed Weapons 2 (28%), Special Services 2 (37%); Hostile Environments 1 (20%), Survival 2 (37%); Technical Services 1 (20%), Engineering 2 (37%)

Secret Society Mission Information

We have reason to believe that one of the Tech Services operatives on the mission is a Corpore Metal member. The Sierra Club would like you to uncover him and arrange for his termination.

Service Group Mission Information

The Computer believes that the strange behaviour in SBR is due to drugs placed in the sector's food supply. Food production is one of PL&C's major responsibilities. It would be exceedingly embarrassing for the Service Group if it were proved that badly prepared or treasonously doctored food is responsible for the goings on in SBR. You must do your best to ensure that the blame is firmly laid elsewhere.

Terra-R-ISM-1

Primary Attributes: STR 9; END (10) 14; AGI 20; DEX 4; MOX 11; CHU 14; MEC 18; POW 13

Secondary Attributes: Car 25; Dam 0; Mac -1; Mel +22%; AW -15%; Com +1%; Bel +7%; Rep +15%

Service Group: Research & Development

Secret Society: Pro-Tech (rank 1)

Mutant Power: Superior Endurance

Skills: Basics 1 (20%), Aimed Weapons 2 (10%), Weapon Maintenance 2 (40%); Technical Services 1 (20%), Engineering 2 (26%), Chemical 3 (31%)

Secret Society Mission Information

Sorry, we haven't got a clue what is going on. Keep your eyes and ears open and report back. In particular find out whatever technology, if any, was responsible for all this trouble and get us the specifications.

Other Information

You have a very important mission to perform for your Services Group. You cannot be told why, but it is absolutely imperative that this matter be played down. Everything will be put right within a day. Stall and delay the group until then. Once everyone in SBR Sector is happy again you can find some scapegoat to pin the trouble on. At all costs don't let Armed Services move into the area in force.

HAND-OUTS & CHARACTERS

MISSION ALERT!!!

ATTENTION: Mission 21508596-PDK.19.42-I

■ Congratulations, citizen. You have been activated for a Troubleshooter mission. You are fortunate to have such an opportunity to serve The Computer!

■ You will be entering SBR Sector on a routine mission to investigate certain treasonous acts. Many citizens in SBR Sector have succumbed to Communist propaganda and are refusing to serve The Computer happily and enthusiastically. The source of this propaganda must be rooted out and terminated.

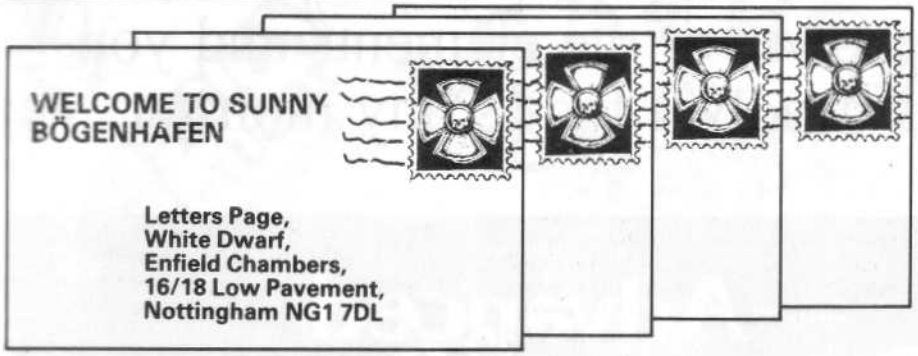
■ Please report immediately to the Troubleshooter Briefing Chamber in PDK Sector for your routine mission briefing. Thank you for your co-operation. The Computer is your friend.

Mission Leader Briefing

■ As the citizen with the highest security clearance in the group you have been chosen for the additional honour of leading the party. To enable you to carry out your mission successfully you are being entrusted with further information about the situation in SBR Sector.

■ All of the citizens in SBR Sector have suddenly become extremely depressed. As The Computer does everything possible to ensure the happiness of Alpha Complex citizens, this can only be the result of Commie sabotage or propaganda. SBR Sector is given over largely to food production. Interestingly three senior Food Vat technicians are unaffected by the depression. It seems likely that one of them is the traitor and that he has put drugs in the sector's food supply. This traitor must be halted before he can sabotage the food supply for the whole complex.

■ As mission leader you will be issued with certain special pieces of equipment. You may issue this to other members of the group as you see fit, but remember that the safe return of this equipment, as well as the success of the mission, is your responsibility.



Hello folks. Lots of letters this month, but most of them seem to be on much the same thing. I think we'd better get this ***Price of Freedom*** *debate out of the way first.*

Alan Reid, Seaford: While very few would expect the scenario of *The Price of Freedom* to be literally about to come true (*Open Box, WD86*), this does not mean the game is 'sheer fantasy' or 'tongue in cheek' and therefore as unremarkable and harmless as D&D, Traveller or RuneQuest. Not only does the game's 'fantasy' make judgements about real societies and real politics, but these judgements form the whole basis of the game.

Your reviewer cheerfully mentions that the game mainly involves killing 'commies'; these might be members of an alien species fit only to be killed in this game, but in reality the millions of people who might call themselves, or might be called, communists are human beings. The game promotes a casual disregard for human life and lends itself to the justification of all manner of repression, torture and massacre in the real world, by effectively branding anyone who might come within a certain range of political views as sub-human.

You may reply that the game is really tongue-in-cheek; if so, it is not very detectable from the advertising.

Tim Child, Merton Park, London: As a roleplayer I find letters of complaint about the ethics of games such as *The Price of Freedom* and *Twilight 2000* incomprehensible. Surely a great deal of the fun of roleplaying is playing a character different from your own. Not all PCs possess the morals of their player.

Having both read ***Price*** *and talked to its author, Greg Costikyan, I still find myself rather disturbed by its premises and assumptions. Sure, it's a game where people take on personas, like actors, but I don't happen to like the characters they are forced to adopt. I personally feel it is a fantasy game, but a very unpleasant one. Obviously, some of our correspondents disagree. We've had quite a few indignant letters defending both sides of the argument, but there is one very interesting common point which they all seem to share, and it is this: regardless of whether the game is fantasy or a disguised political statement, you'd have to be very, very stupid to spend your money actually buying* ***The Price of Freedom****. The designer of the game has admitted that he wrote the game purely and simply to make money, to prey on the gullibility of right-thinking American gamers, and I say good luck to him. If people really want to buy the game that's their look-out. Those of you who now want to write very long letters on the ethics of exploiting stupid gamers can send them to Ste Dillon, c/o Adventurer magaz...*

Simon Watts, Standish, Wigan: In WD85, Allan Miles discussed the logic (or rather the illogic) behind races and classes in AD&D. This reminded me of a theory which I evolved during the height of AD&D playing in these lands, which seemed to explain elven MUs. The main benefit of the elf (and half-elf) class-wise is that they can operate as Fighter/Magic-users, which combine magic with armour. As you know, normal spells cannot be cast by someone wearing armour. Therefore, we can assume that elves have their own type of magic, usable by those with elf blood, which allows the wearing of armour *and* the casting of MU spells, but which is limited in power - the level limit. Naturally this magic is usually favoured by half-elves also. If this theory is adopted, then it naturally implies that single classed MU elves should be permitted to wear armour. This addition probably would make little difference at higher levels, where a cunning mage will have acquired enough magical protections not to need armour, but would aid the survival of elven MUs at lower levels.

I must admit the idea of giving the various races different types of magic has always appealed to me, though I would be inclined to take things on a stage by giving each race access to unique magical powers appropriate to their natural habitat (elves have lots of druidic-type spells, dwarves gain direction finding & rock-working powers, and so on). I find that I get bored with the similarities between so many characters in games like D&D; why should every MU have the same spell and every fighter use the same type of sword - people are far more individual than that.

Your second point, though, seems to benefit the elven MU while immediately disadvan-taging every other spell-caster. Why would anyone bother playing a human MU if an elven one can receive the same powers - and wear armour too? Keeping MUs alive through the lower levels is indeed very difficult, but I'm not so sure your suggestion is the right one. How do other people keep their wizards alive?

Gosh - a serious letter about a game eh? We'll soon put a stop to that, with the return of this letters page's favourite subject - itself!

Richard Bourke, Ealing, London: I write with some trepidation. Both the reason for this fear and the subject I write on is your practice of adding comments after your letters.

These letters result from (mostly) considerable effort and WD staffers, more used to seeing themselves in print, may not realise just how hard it is to air your opinions for public reaction. It is much harder when there is the likelihood of it being appended by an editorial joke.

This has made the letters column quite painful reading. It's not the letters, which you select quite well - whether it is old-timers vs. newcomers, sexism, or the perfidy of the Games Workshop management. Of course you have to select letters, but that is the end of a periodical's responsibility. Just put a notice saying "Opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily... " - for the rest, leave the page to your readers.

To finish, a personal note to whoever it is adds these comments. Please, resist the temptation to fire off a one-liner after this one.

I hope you don't find ***this*** *comment offensive. The reasons such comments exist are manifold. Firstly, some letters ask questions, and we are happy to answer them in print if we feel that they are of interest to other readers too. Secondly, the editorial team do have opinions of their own, not all of them negative, and we believe they are interesting enough to pass on. Furthermore, on the rare occasion when we are jokey or insulting there is usually a very good reason. Humour is a good interlude between more serious subjects, and gives a nice balance to a column, which is why we include trivial letters about figure balancing and all the rest. Besides, negative comments and put-downs often come as responses from readers, as well as from the editorial staff, so stopping our comments wouldn't stop the criticism you claim is keeping some people from writing to us, if indeed it is. Needless to say, we do want everyone who has something to say about this thrilling hobby we enjoy to write to us.*

Tony Hough, Luton, Beds: Has anyone else noticed that there appears to be an anomaly in the vehicle speeds given in the *Judge Dredd* rpg? Let me give you an example:

The Lawmaster bike
Full speed: 570 kph
Max speed: 480 metres/Round
Acc/dec rate: 80 m/R
Stop speed: 120 m/R

One round equals about 10 seconds. There-fore 6 rounds is 1 minute; 6x60 rounds is 1 hour. So the maximum speed should be 480 x 360 metres per hour, which is 172,800 mph, or 172.8 kph. You may agree that 172.8 kph is actually not very fast. It's nowhere near the full speed of 570 kph. Is this the fastest a 22nd Century bike can do? Of course, a skilled Judge can take this up to 570 kph. Where does this figure come from? Have I cocked it up, or have you?

Neither, really. The maximum speed of 570 kph comes from the comic strip, and is explained in the rules as the maximum attainable speed given a clear, straight, level road and lots of time. In the mayhem of combat there is no way that anyone could control a bike going at that speed ***and*** *fire a gun or kick a fleeing perp. Therefore Max Speed is only used in the round sequence, which is only ever used in combat, and represents the maximum safe speed a Judge can drive at while taking part in the fight. OK? However. I must admit that bits of the driving section in* ***Judge Dredd*** *are a bit of a mess, and should really have been sorted out a bit better than they were before the game went to print. To rectify this matter*

slightly there is a set of advanced driving rules among the articles in ***The Judge Dredd Roleplaying Companion****, which will hopefully be released this summer. And while we're on Dredd...*

Iain Aitken, Clydebank, Glasgow: I would like to know what all of this Dredd fuss is about - too much being published for the game in WD? Who do these people think they are? I seriously doubt that they would complain about more being published about a game that they own themselves! They'd all be too bloody pleased.

I feel that I must also congratulate you on *A Day In The Life* by Hugh Tynan. Fabulous, brilliant and amazing don't sum it up. It was the best JD adventure I've seen, even better than the hailed *Judgement Day.*

Linton Porteous, By Muir-of-Ord, Rosshire: I think I can offer an explanation to Graham Broadstreet's gripe (WD85) about too much JD material. The JD game is a Games Workshop product and as such the White Dwarf team must have been very concerned with its sales. So, after waiting until quite a lot of people had bought it in the months following its release, they began to promote sales by producing month after month of JD articles. Of course I could be wrong and the real reason for such a large input of JD material could just be the fact that they realised what an absoflipping-lutely brilliant and well-produced game it is!

Paul Hodgkinson, Tonge Fold, Bolton: Jon Quaife's *RuneQuest* adventure (WD85) was well presented, interesting and quite atmospheric. I don't actually play the game, but *A Tale To Tell* could persuade me to. The length of the adventure, I thought, was not excessive, as any reduction in size may have detracted from the overall quality.

As to the magazine looking like a 'RuneQuest Issue' or a 'Judge Dredd Issue', only so much can fit into a magazine, and concentrating on mainly one or two games an issue perhaps does more for the games, than attempting to squeeze in too many. Of course, some variety is essential, and WD seems to me to get the right balance pretty consistently. This format probably does more for your magazine too, as each issue has its own 'character' rather than just another assorted collection of themes.

Well, I'm glad someone likes something we print! The sequel to Hugh's Dredd adven-ture, ***A Night In The Death****, will be in the next issue. Personally, I can't make out what all the fuss is either. I mean, there hasn't been an adventure for the game for at least two issues now; Paranoia and Cthulhu material appears with about the same regularity; and now that the game is available again at a sensible price I expect RuneQuest will start reappearing at about the same rate too. Linton is right - sales have determined the inclusion of JD material - the game is the second best-selling rpg in the UK ever, so there are obviously one or two people who possess copies.*

As far as the ***mix*** *of games goes, well, the last five issues have had articles on between five and eight different games in every issue, including all those games we apparently never, ever cover like* ***Traveller, Star Trek*** *and* ***Bushido****. We're very glad the giant-sized adventure was popular with some of our readers, and I'm certain we'll be doing adventures of this size again. There are also some tentative plans to actually include a complete game, in several parts, to pull out and collect. Add to these all the celebration coming for issue 90 (our tenth anniversary, you know) and the future's gonna be fun.*

David Knott, Rayleigh, Essex: I got *Paranoia* for Christmas (lucky me!) and found that, as well as being one hell of a good game, it produced some thoughts about roleplaying in general. I think *Paranoia* will be regarded in three different ways: as pure fun (farce, satire, bang-you're-dead, whatever), with contempt (trivial, juvenile, making a mockery of rules, anarchy, blasphemy, heresy), and liberation. That last one may sound a bit melodramatic, but to a certain extent it's true. I can't speak for everyone, but I enjoy roleplaying for the imagination, escapism, humour and the magic it brings out in people.

I agree that some sort of rules framework is necessary to hang all the above qualities on. However, I can't bear it when the rules take over, turning it all into some small-scale combat simulation-cum-maths problem. A short distance into a game of *Paranoia* and the message starts to get through. If you expect your ideas to be handed to you, if you refuse to cope with situation not covered by the rules, if you don't use your imagination - you're going to die. Fre-quently.

It's a strange lesson to learn from *Paranoia*, but it's a valid one - trust the GM (the GM is your friend!). If they're good at what they're doing you'll enjoy yourself, live or die, win or lose. If the situation's a bit strange, rejoice in your GM's imagination and don't freeze up because the latest Plane Shifter's Guide doesn't cover it! One of the younger players I originally saw with the game played with my group recently. Everyone else let themselves go and had fun, but he kept on protesting, "You can't *do* that! This is *Paranoia*!" and quoting rules. I can't stand to see roleplaying shackled like that.

I agree completely, and I would expect more than a few fellow gamers do too. The rules-lawyer is the sort of person who can completely ruin everyone's fun, because they haven't fully grasped what a roleplaying game is. Sure, in Monopoly you follow the rules, because if you did anything drastic the game wouldn't work - but even in that game people have their variants with lotteries, multiple hotels and so on. In a roleplaying game the rules should only be there to add a framework to the simulation of life, and this framework can be modified quite a bit with absolutely no effect on the game. In just about every roleplaying game there's ever been there has been a note somewhere which says 'You are at liberty to change or ignore any single part of these rules if you feel they can be done better another way.' Yet still we see the spectacle of these boring killjoys dragging down and ruining games with their pedantry. I'm sure you will write in and tell us what you think about rules lawyers; perhaps some self-proclaimed rules lawyers will even write in and explain why they do it!

Howard Kell, Suffolk: I thought the recent AD&D adventure *Shadow Magic* (WD84) was an entertaining and original piece of work. It had a good beginning, and a useful ending, with plenty of room for lengthening into a small campaign. But, as with all WD's adventures, I won't use it. Because WD's so popular, both players' and GMs' eyes scan its hallowed pages. Imagine:

GM: "Parazaine asks you to kill off some bugbears, because he's afraid they will steal his eggs. "

Smartalec player: "Aha! I've read this adventure in White Dwarf! Parazaine really wants a book that's in those caves. There's a nabassu and a cleric, and a charmed fighter, and a... "

The DM groans as a whole carefully-planned gaming session goes out the window, and pulls all his hair out.

I know what you mean, for this is one the basic problems with publishing adventures, new monsters, and the like, within the hallowed pages of this greatest of games magazines. How do you stop players reading the adventures before you play 'em? Change the names and map layouts a bit? Run them through the dungeon backwards? Try and make them roleplay properly - if they can pretend a dungeon they've memorised from the Dwarf is completely new to their character they deserve all the EPs for roleplaying you can give 'em! I don't think there's any real way of stopping players reading the magazine (it'd be disastrous to our sales!) - unless you know different, of course!

And finally, here's some pretentious person showing off his knowledge of art:

Vincent Trewartha, Windsow: White Dwarf's reputation for being the epitome of originality suddenly plummetted in my eyes, when I saw the November cover. This is entitled 'Baron Heinrich von Torlichhelm, Master of the Imperial Order of Knight's Panther'. I would say that this was heavily influenced (to put it kindly) by Gericault's 'Officer of the Chasseurs à Cheval'. Anyway, I can honestly say that I much prefer Gericault's painting!

Well spotted, Vincent (he included a photocopy of Gericault's original but space prevents... etc). What Vincent didn't point out was that Gericault actually nicked the pose of the horse from a painting by Grosz, who stole it from a sculpture by... It's a tradition in painting to borrow classic poses, and John Blanche (the artist of our cover) was simply paying homage to the fine orginal painting. It's something he does a lot, actually - you should see his version of Jacques Louis David's 'Rape of the Sabine Women'!

And on that wholesome note let's close the page for another month. There, and I wasn't even rude to those plonkers in the tights with the rubber swords, was I?

Letters ed: Marc Gascoigne

AWESOME

L · I · E · S

Work in Progress

You might not know it, but the GW Design Studio is currently just about the biggest and busiest place in the games world. There's more being planned and designed inside the four walls where *White Dwarf* comes from than at any other games company. Coo. So all those designer chappies who occasionally clutter up the the WD offices have to be doing something. Well, maybe.

What follows is a sort of sneak preview of what the GW design studio is doing. We'll try to update reports on what's *very* new and the 'how and why' of design in every issue. Watch this space...

Warhammer Army Lists - After a frenzied, super-human January slog, the Army Lists are nearing their first edit. It looks like the package will feature lots of new rules for Warhammer Battle games: new types of formations, manoeuvres and the roles of heroes and magicians.

There's going to be a list for each of the most popular Warhammer armies. This will break down into a section detailing profiles, new troops and any special rules they use, along with an easy-to-use list from which players can select armies of 1-2000 points. This usually works out at about 100 figures or so for a typical force.

All this means a new depth of detail for each army, listing the numbers of troops which can be used, their arms, their armour and their leaders as well as any allies or mercenaries.
Richard Halliwell

Rogue Trooper - YEEEHAAA!!! Suck on this, Norty! *Dakkadakkadakka...*

Yes, the *Rogue Trooper* boardgame is coming along nicely. This, the second of GW's boardgames based on characters from *2000AD* is due out in April, and is bang on schedule. Each Player controls a Rogue Genetic Infantryman on the battle-scarred world of Nu-Earth, encountering Nort forces and interesting companions while searching for clues to the Traitor's identity. Once the Traitor is unmasked, the GIs chase him from Milli-com across Nu-Earth until he is killed.

Among the unique features of this game are the Bio-Chip rules, whereby a player GI who is killed ends up as a Bio-Chip sitting in another player's rifle, helmet or backpack, and the two form a team for the rest of the game. This is going to be a must for all fans of the Rogue Trooper comic strip, and also (we hope!) an enjoyable and highly playable SF boardgame in its own right.
Graeme Davis

Death on the Reik - The epic campaign begun in *The Enemy Within* and developed in *Shadows Over Bogenhafen* is now gathering pace. *Death on the Reik* will follow a similar format to its predecessors, in that the idea is to provide both adventure material and genuine supplementary information that GMs will want to hang onto long after the campaign itself has reached its conclusion.

The aim is to allow the players a great deal of freedom of movement, and so there are boat-handling rules, encounter tables, and lots of small 'cameo' adventures which the GM can use as and when he or she wants. Of course, there's also going to be a major thread running through the whole thing - and a really exciting, gothic-horror climax in the Hammer House of Horror tradition.

Work progresses as well as anything can around here; what with people interrupting you to write bits for White Dwarf...
Phil Gallagher

Illustrated by Wil Rees

Warhammer 40,000/Rogue Trader - Imagine a darkened cell whose sparse furnishing are wormed and dusty, whose unevenly flagged floor is sticky with little pools of saliva, whose sole occupant slumps indecorously upon a cluttered desk. Escape is an impossible dream, food a luxury earned only by fulfilling quotas other men would think impossible.

Like now. The final word of a huge tome is complete, and its bulk lies undisturbed upon the gnarled desk top. I speak of *Warhammer 40,000* (WH40K) alias *Rogue Trader* which some may recall as Citadel's proposed futuristic battle game based around the Warhammer system... once advertised never forgotten. Ah, well. *WH40K* is indeed the long awaited futuristic version of the *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* system, and shares many of its mechanisms and much of its feel.

WH40K is something of a new approach to future gaming, it's not 'science fiction' for starters, but pure fantasy set in the far future (about forty thousand years in the future to be approximate). Technology is important, but not the mainstay of civilisation - the game is set in a dirty, mean, bloodthirsty universe.

Among much else, the background features an Emperor as old as the human race whose psychic energies are all that stands between humanity and extinction. Unfortunately the only way to keep the Emperor alive is by the continual sacrifice of lesser psykers (psionics, telepaths and the like) and by the rigorous suppression of those whose minds have been taken over by unworldly creatures.

Although the game shares *Warhammer Battle* mechanisms, they have been suitably modified to allow for the *very* different weapons and equipment. Statistics follow the same form, for example, and many of the creatures cross over. In fact, the Warhammer Fantasy world and *WH40K* share the same universe; the Slann, as Warhammer players will already know, are extra-terrestials anyway, and as for the place of Chaos... all will be revealed.
Rick Priestley

Blood Royal - the game of dynastic conflict, is getting close to release. Invented by Derek Carver, a man already with *Warrior Knights* to his credit, it features many new and innovative features.

The concept of the game is very simple; players control dynasties of royal characters and a country in 14th Century Western Europe, and must try to use these resources to make their dynasty the richest at the end of the game. Rather like *Diplomacy* or *Machiavelli*, the key to winning the game is the success players have in negotiating deals with one another. The difference is that these deals are formalised through contracts which the players make with each other when they marry their royal characters. These deals cannot be broken until one of the characters in the marriage dies, and so the players are actually writing additional rules into the game as they play!

Even with these contracts, there is plenty of scope for treachery, double-dealing, power-politics, dynastic aggrandisement and open warfare. It is possible to play *Blood Royal* as a wargame, and there will be times when more subtle players resort to armed force to seal an advantage. The real key to the game, however, is the making of deals, and using these to protect yourself from the machinations of most of the players while you move in on a single victim, erm... ally, that's the word...
Paul Cockburn

gobbledigook COMPETITION

Now look here, you 'Gook fans. This is your chance to win fame and riches beyond human dreams. You could be the next Frank Miller. Perhaps. But this is it! We've frittered away nearly a whole pound (and a bit more) on the wonderful prizes that you can win in the *Gook Script Competition!!*

All you've got to do is write a script for a 'Gook strip. Sounds easy like that, doesn't it? But wait, there's more to it than sitting down and drawing out a 'Gook of your own. In fact, that's exactly what you shouldn't do! We want a script, not a completed strip. This should include details of what each panel shows and the words. The words include any text boxes ('Blundering in the blizzard, Gook discovers...'), speech (who says what and when) and special effects noises ('FLUMPH!' 'RRRRIPP!!' 'SQUIDGE' 'YAAARGH!' - you know the sort of thing). That's what we want. And for all your effort...

All the winners will be used by Bil to create 'Gook strips for *White Dwarf*. The best entry will win £50, a subscription to *White Dwarf* and an original piece of Gook artwork. The five runners-up will each receive a subscription and artwork. So, *why are you still sitting here?* Get writing, and send your entries to:

Gook Competition
White Dwarf
Games Workshop Design Studio
14-16 Low Pavement
Nottingham NG1 7DL.

And the closing date for entries is 1 April 1987. Seems appropriate somehow.